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DESTINY.

BY W. H.

Had I met thee long ago
When Life was in its morning glow,
Mine might have been a happy fate—
'Tis now too late—'tis now too late!

Or if the tide could backward turn,
Or if the fire again could burn,
I still might pray, I still might wait,
For that which I have found too late.

Of what avail that now we meet,
When Hope is in his winding-sheet—
When skies are gray and leaves are sere,
When day declines and night is near?

Of what avail our idle tears
Above the graves of long dead years?
For though Grief struggle to the last,
She wins but ashes from the Past.

Our souls are one, but we are twain,
And everemore will so remain,
Till Time shall ope that furthest gate,
Where Death drives back the hounds of Fate.

For thee and me, for us alone,
The agony too deep for moan;
Others have found the shining mark,
But we have wandered in the dark.

Oh, sweet within thy saddened eyes
I see the ghosts of tears and sighs;
Sighs for the joys we have not seen,
And tears for love that might have been.

Clasp hands and pray, for there is one
Who can undo what Fate hath done;
Clasp hands, and pray what'r betides,
Death may unite what Life divides!

WHO SHALL JUDGE

BY K. F. H.

SHE did not interest me in the least at first. I had rejoiced over my discovery of the little hamlet where I was staying, a tiny old-world village, straggling irregularly up a Kentish hillside, unchanged for a hundred years past, unknown to the summer visitor.

I meant to be undisturbed. A great idea seized me and I needed quiet in which to work it out. Finding this impossible in London, I fled from the noise and rush of the season, leaving no address. As a novelist I was really more than a little successful, but now I was intent upon a book which should make my name immortal.

For a week my work prospered. No one called, my solitude was unbroken. Then one day, Mrs. Kilpin, my extremely communicative landlady, informed me that a young lady and gentleman had taken rooms in the cottage next door and were going to stay some time. I was annoyed. I felt uncomfortable.

I did not wish for the society of any young lady or gentleman. I determined to ignore them resolutely. I met the girl that very morning and looked the other way carefully. For two or three days I succeeded in maintaining an attitude of indifference.

Then the presence of my neighbors began to irritate me. It was the girl I particularly objected to, her brother was a mere nonentity, a shadow of his sister. But she was cyclonic. To begin with, I was always meeting her. I ran up against her half-a-dozen times a day, going out at the gate.

If I went for a walk in the woods I was sure to see her, walking with big strides, her three terriers leaping and rushing round her. If I went along the road she would come tearing down the hill, driving her dog-cart and fast-trotting cob. She was always in bounding health and spirits, she wore straight, severely-cut garments, shirts and ties, straw hats with colors, like a man.

She was very tall and erect and not very slender, a type I had always detested. She wore her hair drawn back from her forehead and coiled flat at the back of her head, no soft curls and puffs like other girls. She had a cheerful, ringing voice, and always carried a walking-stick.

Her brother was a delicate-looking boy of about twenty, who evidently leant on his sister and depended on her for everything. Their natural position seemed quite reversed.

I hate mannish women. Even the near neighborhood of one had a bad effect on my nerves. She was so noisy and energetic, for ever coming in and out, calling to her brother, or playing with her barking, yelping dogs.

I bore it as best I could. Then one morning that girl took to playing the piano. For the first ten minutes I did not mind. Then she made some awful discords, stopped and went back over the passage again with the same mistakes.

She began again. I got up and shut the window. The irritating sounds were still audible. At the end of half-an-hour I flung down my pen in a state of wild exasperation and marched into the next garden. All the doors were open and I walked in unceremoniously. The girl was still pounding at that unfortunate instrument.

"I am sorry to disturb you," I said, "but I really must request that when you are practising you will keep the windows closed. I am engaged on an important piece of work and the noise is most annoying."

I was in a very bad temper. I am musical and the sounds she had been extracting were excruciating to any one of a nervous temperament. I thought she would probably assert her right to play as much and as badly as she liked.

It was what I should have expected of her.

To my surprise she blushed. Masculine women do not blush as a rule.

"Oh, I am so sorry to have worried you," she said. "I know I don't play well, but my brother is so fond of music, and I thought I might manage to learn some of his accompaniments. He finds the evenings long, poor boy; but I will be careful to shut the windows in future."

Her unexpectedly pacific reply irritated me more than ever. I felt discomfited and put in the wrong.

"I shall be extremely obliged to you," I said shortly and went back to my writing.

But my train of thought had been interrupted, my ideas refused to flow. I found myself thinking about the girl next door instead of the predicament in which I had just landed my heroine.

I am a good judge of character, and I hate to be mistaken in my estimate of man or woman. I had decided that my neighbor was loud, masculine and aggressive. My very short interview with her had upset that theory.

She had been apologetic and humble when addressed by a total stranger in a manner which it suddenly occurred to me that she might just have resented. In a room her voice was singularly sweet and pleasant, and far from being aggressive she had seemed shy.

All possibility of work was over for me for that day. I was angry with myself now and I went off for a long tramp in the woods to work off my vexation at my own boorishness.

In the road I met the boy and my heart smote me as I noticed his pale face and languid movement. He found the evenings so long. I mentally styled myself an unsociable, selfish brute, and began to lay plans for cultivating friendly relations with him, though, as far as his sister was concerned, I had certainly not made a happy beginning. For the next two days, however, I never once met Miss Heron, as Mrs. Kilpin informed me was the young lady's name.

She was evidently avoiding me, for I caught her once actually turning back into the house, in order not to meet me.

This was unpleasant, the more so that I was forced to confess that the snub was not undeserved.

I was by this time well forward with my work, the great stress and strain which accompanies the birth of an idea was over, and I was once more fit for intercourse with my kind.

I was even beginning to find my own society, though exclusive, a trifle dull. On the third day I was out in the fields, some way from home, when getting over a stile I felt a stab of pain in the region of the ankle.

Well I knew what it foreboded, another few steps and down I went, giving my foot an ugly wrench as I fell.

I sat cursing my ill-luck and casting about for some means of getting back to the village.

I was not far from the high road and I managed to crawl the short distance. There was nothing for it but to wait till some one came along. It was very hot and the pain in my foot was intense.

I was thankful when at the end of half-an-hour I heard wheels in the distance. Then, to my horror, round the corner dashed Miss Heron in a dog-cart, driving as usual at the rate of twelve miles an hour. She seemed to guess there was something wrong, for when she saw me she pulled the cob almost on to its haunches.

"What's the matter? Had an accident?" she called in her loudest, most ringing tones.

"I've given my foot a twist," I replied. "I can't walk. Would you mind letting them know in the village? Tell them to send something to fetch me."

She was out of the cart and at my side like a flash.

"Let me see," she said. She took hold of my foot in a business-like, capable way.

"Why, it's dreadfully swollen already. You should have taken off your boot at once. We shall have to cut it now. Lend me your knife."

I produced it meekly.

She ripped up the laces and leather in the deftest way, and I sighed with relief.

"Now you're coming back with me at once," she said with authority.

"I beg your pardon," said I. "I can't possibly get into that high cart."

"You can if I help you."

"But you are not strong enough."

"Am I not?" she said with a smile. "Just try."

I got to my feet, or rather to my foot, and hopped towards the cart. The cob was a restive, fidgety animal.

"Quiet, Jenny," said Miss Heron. "I'll just hitch her to this tree so that she shan't move while you're getting in. Now, put your sound foot on the step."

I did so and the next minute I found myself safely landed. She had lifted me from behind as well and more gently than a man could have done it. She came round to the other side, smiling and a little flushed, to take her place by me on the lofty driving seat.

"This will shake you much less than any of the springless conveyances from the village," she said, gathering the reins in her rather large, well-shaped hands.

"I'm giving you a lot of trouble, I'm afraid," I said, feeling the lameness of the remark.

"Now, how disappointing you are," she said, looking down at me quizzically. "From the originality of your behavior when first I had the pleasure of making your acquaintance I should never have expected you to say anything so conventional."

I seized my opportunity.

"I owe you an apology," I said. "I was abominably rude, but the fact is I am always unfit for society when I am writing. I was not getting on and I was out of temper at my own stupidity, so I vented my ill-humor on you. I beg your pardon. I have been wanting to apologize ever since."

"You were rude," she said honestly. "But I saw you weren't quite responsible for your actions. We'll forgive and forget, shall we?"

She held out her hand for me to shake, just like a good-natured schoolboy.

"I hope you'll leave off avoiding me now," I said laughing.

"You noticed that?"

She blushed in the way that betrayed her sex so delightfully.

"I felt awfully shy after such a snub. By the way do you know my name?"

"If your landlady is half as talkative as mine you must know that and a great deal more besides about me."

A shadow of swift vexation passed over her face.

"How people gossip in the country!" she exclaimed impatiently. "I don't know your name, anyway. Mrs. Kilpin is very mysterious about you. She says you are 'one of them writing gentlemen from London.'"

I laughed.

"My name is Maxwell—Philip Maxwell."

"What!" she cried. "Maxwell! Are you the Maxwell, the new author every one is talking about?"

"That is not for me to say. But I believe there is only one author of that name, and I am he."

"I am very pleased to meet you," she said heartily. "I admire your books extremely, and I would sacrifice a good deal more than my bad practicing to the pleasure of reading a new one."

"Please don't speak of that," I said. "I hope you will allow me to come in and play your brother's accompaniments sometimes. I know a little of the art."

"That would be very kind of you," she answered. "Poor Bernard is very delicate, and he gets low and depressed if the weather is bad and he has to stay indoors. I should be so glad if you could cheer him up a little."

Her boyish manner slipped from her as soon as her feelings were touched. As she spoke of her brother an anxious, almost maternal expression came into her eyes.

"I'll do my best," I said gently, wondering at the change in her.

She seemed to fall into a sort of reverie, and did not speak again until we drew up before my gate.

Then she was all energy, helped me carefully from the dog-cart, got me into my sitting-room and wanted to go for the doctor.

But I assured her it was not necessary. The same thing had happened to me once or twice before, and I knew that a week's rest, with cold bandages, would set me right.

So she left me, giving many directions to Mrs. Kilpin, and promising that her brother should come in later to see how I was getting on.

The next few days, to my deep disgust I was obliged to spend in bed. Bernard Heron came to sit with me several times. He was rather an uninteresting youth, evidently in very bad health, and I found it hard to make conversation with him.

The one object on which he became enthusiastic was his sister. At the bare mention of her name his whole manner changed, his face lit up, his eyes brightened.

"Ah, Nora!" he exclaimed. "No one knows what Nora is, Mr. Maxwell. She is the one thing which makes my miserable life worth living."

He seemed to regard her as something between a mother and a guardian angel.

He would talk of her by the hour, telling me long stories of her prowess in the hunting-field, how she was a better shot with a rifle than most men, and yet the best of sick nurses, the most sympathetic of sisters.

I let him talk. Nora Heron's character interested and puzzled me. I felt I had not got to the bottom of it. I did not know the mainsprings of her life.

My foot improved slowly, and one morning, to my great relief, I was able with Mrs. Kilpin's help, to hobble into my sitting-room. I was trying to do a little work when a quick, firm step sounded on the gravel.

Some one rapped at the door.

"Come in," I cried.

There was a rush of joyful dogs, and Miss Heron came in like a breeze, fresh and cheerful as ever.

"How are you this morning?" she asked. "I heard you were down, so I thought I would come in and inquire. Down, Nellie! Down, Chappie! I hope you don't mind them. They are so glad to get out, dear things."

She sat down, one terrier on her lap, the other two on the skirts of her gown. She looked the very incarnation of health and vitality.

"Diana the huntress," I said, looking at her with a smile.

"A very modern Diana, in tailor-made clothes and a sailor hat," she laughed. "How goes the book?"

"Getting on well," I answered, with a glance at the sheets of foolscap. "The worst is over now."

"When will it be published? I'm longing to read it."

"Not for another two months, I'm afraid." Then yielding to a sudden unaccountable impulse, I said, "Would you care to hear the first few chapters?"

She flushed brightly.

"Oh, Mr. Maxwell! That would be lovely. Are you sure you don't mind?"

"On the contrary, it will be a great pleasure."

She settled herself to listen; I to read.

I never had a more sympathetic audience. Her attention never flagged; she kept her eyes fixed on me with a look of keen, critical appreciation. When I stopped she drew a long breath.

"That is splendid!" she said heartily. "I can't tell you how much I like it. It is much better than anything you have done before. There is something in it which your other books lack—something more human, more sympathetic—I can't exactly put it into words, but you will see, it will be your greatest success."

I felt that her approval was worth having. She had such a strong, earnest way of speaking, her words carried conviction and encouragement.

I realized that though she lacked some feminine charm, she was certainly above and beyond all ordinary feminine weaknesses.

Utterly truthful, utterly honest, was Nora Heron, frank and free and noble in heart and soul.

She went away, making me promise to come and see them as soon as I was able.

The next evening I found my way to their door, with the aid of stick and the arm of my landlady's husband.

Miss Heron was alone, surrounded by her dogs as usual. She dropped the book she had in her hand as I came in, and looked up with a smile.

"You've found your feet again, I see," she said. "Come in and sit down. I was just wanting some one to talk to."

"You are in very good company," I said, taking up the volume she had let fall. "So you read Kant. I should hardly have expected that of you."

"Why not?" she asked sharply.

"I thought your tastes lay more in the direction of out-door amusements and interests."

"Is it impossible to combine the two?" she asked. "I suppose you thought the Sportsman would be more in my line, or Hawley Smart. But I like anything which keeps my brain employed. I always read Kant when I am inclined to think about myself."

"Are you such an unpleasant subject for meditation?" I said laughingly.

"You don't know!" For an instant there settled in her eyes a look of the most intense sadness. Then it was gone, and she began to talk. She led me on to speak of myself, of my successes, my ambitions, my work.

She had the critical faculties of a man and the sympathies of a woman. She was the most delightful companion and comrade I have ever met.

Bernard came in presently and dragged me to the piano. I was surprised to find that he played the violin exquisitely, and we were soon lost in a world of harmony.

Those evenings! I look back on them even now with a tightening of the heart-strings. I at the piano, Bernard drawing wonderful melody from his violin, and in the background Nora, lounging on the sofa, a restful look in her dark eyes.

It gave me a shock when I discovered that Miss Heron smoked. She took a cigarette as naturally as her brother when the box was produced.

I suppose she read my disapproval in my face and it seemed to annoy her, for she fell straightway into her most boyish mood and almost succeeded in making me feel a return of my first dislike to her.

She was an odd mixture. Sometimes for a whole day I would forget that I was not in the society of a clever young man, then some chance remark, some careless word, would bring out all the latent womanliness of her character.

I had driven with her one morning to a neighboring village, where she wished to make some sketches. I sat by her, smoking and talking, while she painted.

A young woman had come out of a cottage near by with a baby in her arms and stood watching us.

"What a pretty picture!" I whispered to Miss Heron. An ideal English mother and child. You want a figure in your sketch. Shall I go and ask the girl to stand while you put her in?"

To my astonishment she seemed intensely irritated,

"Pray do nothing of the sort!" she exclaimed. "I detest children. I can't paint while that woman stands there. I shall go home."

And she actually shut up her paint box and walked off to the dog cart, leaving me to follow. I was astounded. She drove home without uttering a word, her lips tightly compressed, her eyes frowning.

Her annoyance was so completely out of all proportion to its cause, that it seemed to me that something must underlie it. However, she vouchsafed no explanation.

I ventured one weak remark.

"I thought all women liked children," I said

"I am not all women," she retorted abruptly, and fell once more into a heavy silence.

We separated at our respective gates without a word. When we met again she had apparently forgotten the incident, and greeted me with her usual light-heartedness.

I did not forget it until something else happened which made me feel that there was no end to the contradictions of this strange girl's nature.

I was sitting with her at the window of their sitting-room one afternoon, watching the passers-by in the village street. This street was a source of great amusement to us. Endless were the studies in character and human nature which we had made from the window.

A small, shrewish-looking girl came along the pavement wheeling a perambulator in which was a baby. The child was crying in a feeble, irritating way, which seemed to annoy its nurse considerably.

Just as they came opposite us the child uttered a louder wail than usual. The girl shook it violently. "Be quiet, yer little varmint, will yer?" she exclaimed. Then with a vigorous slap, "I'll give you something to care for!"

Miss Heron started from her chair and rushed into the street.

She seized the girl's arm.

"How dare you! How dare you ill-treat the child like that!" she cried. The girl cowered before the unexpected descent of a goddess from the car. I had never seen Miss Heron angry before. She was transformed; I hardly recognized her in this avenging angel with blazing eyes and quivering lips. She bent over the baby.

"Poor little thing!" she said, and her tone changed to one of purest pity. "Look, Mr. Maxwell! No wonder it cried; one poor little leg was twisted right under it."

She took the child in her arms, soothing it and talking to it in the tenderest way.

Was this the girl who said she hated children? She was looking at this one as I remember my mother looked at me, many long years ago.

The baby was quite quiet, it seemed to recognize a friend. It was a pretty child, and as Miss Heron held it in her arms, that new, tender, loving look in her eyes, I was suddenly reminded of one of Raphael's divinest pictures, the Sistine Madonna.

She caught my glance and blushing vividly, busied herself with putting it back into its perambulator and arranging it comfortably.

"Now, if ever you dare to touch that child again I shall know it," she said to the little nurse, with a last dangerous flash of her eyes. "Remember I shall be watching you. I never forget any one."

I followed her silently into the house.

"How contradictory you are," I said. "Only the other day you told me you did not like children."

She did not answer. She gave me one look, and then left the room without a word.

Her brother looked after her languidly. "Leave her alone, Maxwell!" he said. "She is in one of her moods to-day. She only wants to be by herself. She will go off to the woods now and come back this evening as jolly as ever."

This was exactly what happened. Miss Heron was more charming that night than she had ever been before. I stayed late, playing with Bernard, who was looking wonderfully better. I told his sister so as I said good night.

"You really think so?" she said. "Thank God for that!"

She spoke with the most heart-felt thanksgiving in her tone. I felt almost angry with Bernard. What had he done to deserve such affectionate devotion? How is it that the best of women insist on throwing their love away on oftentimes the most unworthy objects?

That evening, had I but known it, was the last of our happy undisturbed camaraderie.

The next day I was obliged to go up to town on business connected with the publication of my book, and did not return till late.

As I walked up the hill in the dusk, a dark figure stood at the Herons' gate. It was Nora. She did not see me until I got quite close to her. Then she started violently.

"Bernard!" she exclaimed, and as she recognized me. "Oh, it's you, Mr. Maxwell."

Her accent changed to one of acute disappointment.

I was piqued. She knew the object of my journey to town, and I had been looking forward to her usual bright, sympathetic questionings. I had even been vain enough to fancy when I saw her that she might be watching for my return.

I stayed by her, making desultory remarks at intervals, to which she gave curt answers or none at all.

"Has your brother not come in yet?" I asked at last.

She shot a suspicious glance at me.

"Not yet," she said shortly.

"Would you like me to go and look after him, if you are anxious?"

"Certainly not. I am not in the least anxious."

This was not encouraging. The church clock struck nine; it was quite dark.

"I should think your dinner must be waiting for you," said Miss Heron, breaking the silence of her own accord for the first time.

It was a pret'y broad hint.

"Do you mean that you want to get rid of me?" I asked.

"I should be glad if you would go in," she answered.

I was deeply offended.

'Good night, then," I said coldly.

She did not even hear me, she had already turned and was looking down the dark road again.

I went indoors, anger and jealousy raging within me. Was her heart so small that it would only harbor one affection? Her indifference was maddening.

I had thought her my friend. I had spoken to her as I had spoken to no one else; I had laid bare my very soul to her. I resolved that she should not make a fool of me twice.

With the morning, however, things looked differently. I knew how over-anxious she was inclined to be where Bernard was concerned, and how she resented any appearance of interference between them. There might have been some excuse for her conduct.

I had bought a book for her in London, and with my peace-offering in my hand I went in next door. There was no one in the sitting room. I rang the bell.

"Ask Miss Heron if I can see her," I said to the landlady.

She came back with the message.

"Mr. Bernard is not very well, and Miss Heron is sorry she cannot come down." I hardened my heart as I turned away.

Bernard could not be very ill, I thought, or they would have a doctor. She would not even spare five minutes to me it seemed.

Nevertheless, the next day I called again and sent up to know if there was anything I could do. This time the answer was:

"Miss Heron is much obliged, but she does not need any help."

This was the end, then. I was grievously disappointed. I supposed she was tired of me and had determined to get rid of me; or perhaps she was unconsciously afraid of my falling in love with her, and had chosen this means of damping any aspirations I might be supposed to entertain. She need not have feared, I would as soon have loved an icicle as one so narrow-hearted.

For the next three days I neither saw or heard anything of the Herons. I do not know why I stayed on in the place; my work was done, there was nothing to keep me, but I still lingered, though I was angry with myself for doing so.

On the fourth day as I turned into the main street I came full upon the brother and sister. Bernard looked very ill, that I could see. Miss Heron made an uncertain movement as if she meant to bow. I yielded to the fierce impulse of anger which rose up in my heart; I turned my head away and cut her dead.

After that I felt it was time for me to be gone. I went home and made my preparations for leaving the next morning. About nine o'clock, all my arrangements finished, I left the house meaning to take a last stroll in the woods.

As I got to the bottom of the hill I heard some one staggering about and singing tipsily. It was very dark. Next moment a man lurched heavily into me; something in his figure seemed familiar to me; I seized him by the shoulder, and to my horror recognized Heron.

[TO BE CONCLUDED IN NEXT NUMBER.]

His Violin.

BY F. M. P.

"WHAT a queer old fellow that music-master of yours is," remarked Arthur Hazlitt to his sister one rainy day, as he watched the teacher's clumsy figure stooping under a huge umbrella.

"Queer? Yes," answered Gertrude, who was looking over a piece of music; "but he is not exactly old, and he is a splendid musician."

"Which, in your eyes makes up for any amount of oddity."

"Of course. Now go away, Arthur—I haven't time to chatter,"—and Gertrude turned resolutely to the piano.

But she was hardly in the mood to give full attention to her music, for Mr. Hether had made a remark in the course of the lesson which had given her food for reflection. He had only said, "My niece plays this;" but Gertrude, who had never before heard him mention any relative, was puzzled, and she was anxious to know more about the niece and her life.

"What a strange sort of existence the girl must have," she thought, "living all alone with old Hether; and how very lonely she must be."

"Mr. Hether, I have a question to ask you." It was a week later, and the music-master was sitting by the piano; but Miss Hazlitt could not fix her attention upon her task.

"I see—you want to know something; and, when you know it, you will perhaps have a little time for Bach. Ask it at once, young lady and then we will work!"—and Mr. Hether fixed his queer keen eyes upon the girl.

"I hope you won't think me very impertinent," faltered Gertrude, who suddenly realized that she was taking a liberty; "but you mentioned your niece last week, and I have been wondering if she lives with you."

Mr. Hether's eyes brightened oddly. He did think the putting of such a question a liberty.

"Yes, madam," he said quietly. "My niece has lately come home from Germany, and lives with me; my home is hers! Shall we go on?"

"I thought perhaps—I mean, if you do not mind—I mean, may I call upon her?" stammered Gertrude. "She must be lonely at times; you are away so much."

Mr. Hether's face softened at once.

"You are very kind," he said; "and Vanda will think it good of you. She is

lonely!"—and then he turned to the music, and gave Gertrude no further chance of inquiring into his private affairs.

* * * * * *

"Josef, Josef—I have news for you! What do you think has happened to-day?"—and a young slim girl came flying down the stairs and into Mr. Hether's arms.

He kissed the girl tenderly, and let her help him to take off his coat.

"Has Miss Hazlitt been to call, then, my child?" he asked.

"Ah, Josef, you know everything. Yes—Miss Hazlitt has called, and I have played to her; and I am to go and practise with her, and then we will play at the concert!"—and Vanda danced up and down the narrow hall.

Josef hung his coat and hat upon their pegs, and taking up the roll of music he had brought home, went slowly upstairs with a puzzled look on his face.

They had but a small sitting-room, and it was so crowded with music-books and musical instruments that there was hardly room to turn round.

There was a grand piano and a couple of violins, besides a violoncello, and music printed and manuscript, cumbered every chair, and lay in heaps on the table and under the piano. Josef looked aghast at the disorder, and Vanda clasped her hands with an exclamation of regret.

"Ah, Josef, I am in fault!" she cried. "I ought to have made the room tidy; but I have been looking for some lovely things I used to play. See—here is something you shall accompany, and we will see if I can still play it."

Mr. Hether shook his head and began to arrange the scattered sheets, while Vanda took up her violin and began tuning it. It would have been hard to say which instrument contributed most to the beauty of the concerto which shortly absorbed both players.

But Mr. Hether had ears for something besides his own playing, and as soon as they had gone through the first movement, he began to criticize, and at last caught up the other violin and played the passage to Vanda in a masterly manner, which put her performance quite in the shade.

"How beautiful your playing is!" she cried, clapping her hands with delight. "Why do you not go and make a name, instead of wasting time here with this stupid teaching?"

"Once I had an ambition, but that faded away long ago," Josef returned sadly; and he played no more that evening.

* * * * *

If Mr. Hether had doubts at first as to the desirability of letting Vanda become acquainted with his pupils, he was soon obliged to own that nothing could have been better for his niece than Gertrude's Hazlitt's companionship.

The elder girl possessed a good many quiet virtues in addition to her musical talents, and the strength of her character proved an excellent check to Vanda's excitable nature, while her deep respect and admiration for the queer musician, who looked so much older than his years, insensibly taught the young girl to treat her uncle less as a comrade and more as the parent he had always been to her in everything but actual relationship.

There was only one drawback to the friendship, and that was the presence of Gertrude's brother.

A handsome young man, home on long leave from India, and set down in a dull country town, must have something to do, and it was only natural that Arthur Hazlitt, after meeting all the society young ladies of Collington at various entertainments, and thinking them all both dull and provincial, should take great pleasure in the company of a beautiful foreign-looking girl, who, though not in society, was more graceful and better mannered than any girl he had ever met.

At first no one paid much attention to the fact that Arthur had conceived a fancy for music; but, when he was heard to remark that the violin was the one perfect instrument for a graceful woman to play, a certain amount of astonishment was exhibited in unmusical "sets."

And, when he handed Miss Hether on to the platform at the Christmas Choir Concert, and stood absorbed all through her performance, all Collington was scandalized, and a good many very unpleasant things were said about the coldness of the music master's niece.

The fact that "old Hether's" niece was making advances to "poor Mr. Hazlitt" was very soon so thoroughly circulated that there was nothing strange in its coming to Mr. Hether's ears.

The music-master had heard a good many bits of gossip in his day, and was well acquainted with the usual course of a story in Collington; but his face grew very anxious as he turned homewards after his last lesson, for it was hard for him to hear the faintest breath of scandal falling upon the fair fame of the girl who was dearer to him than anything on earth.

As usual Vanda met him at the door with a bright face, and took him upstairs to the fire-lit room where she had been practising. A bunch of Christmas roses and maidenhair-fern on the table attracted the music master's attention at once.

"Flowers are rare in winter," he said gravely, taking up the glass. "Where did you get these, my child?"

"Mr. Hazlitt brought them here, Josef," Vanda answered, blushing.

"My darling," Josef said sadly, "it is not the custom in England for young officers to visit maidens who live alone. You must not let him come again, and you must refuse his flowers."

"Ah, no!" Vanda smiled as she laid her hand upon Mr. Hether's arm. "Listen, Josef! He has never been here before; but now he has a right to come, for he has asked me to be his wife, and I have said 'Yes.' Oh, Josef, my flowers!"—for Hether had flung them angrily upon the table.

"Never mind the flowers!" was his answer. "Vanda, my child, I fear this is not for your happiness. The Hazlitts are proud; they will never let you marry their heir. What was he thinking of to ask such a thing?"

"He loves me!" said the girl proudly; then, bending her head, she cried, "Oh, Josef, Josef, you will not come between us?"

"I think only of your happiness, child. And we will speak no more of this at present—to-morrow will be time enough. Fetch your violin and play to me."

The next morning Gertrude Hazlitt's lesson was due, and she found her music master as attentive as usual, though his face was very grave; but, when they had finished, he asked if he could see Mr. Hazlitt—a request which surprised her, for her father had never to her knowledge spoken to Mr. Hether.

She was still more puzzled when, on taking her master to the library, she found her father and brother evidently awaiting him, and she went back to her piano wondering what was going to happen.

In a few minutes she was joined by Arthur, who insisted upon pouring out his trouble to her.

"And now," he concluded, "I have been ignominiously sent out of the room by that queer old man of yours. I never felt so small in my life as when he turned round and said, 'Mr. Arthur, I wish to speak to your father; you will kindly leave us alone.' And I had to go."

"When Mr. Hether says a thing he always means it," remarked Gertrude thoughtfully. "But I don't know what papa will say."

"What can he say? Vanda is beautiful and clever, and a perfect lady. What more can he want?"

Mr. Hazlitt however wanted a good deal more; and Mr. Hether was unfolding a strange tale that perplexed the Squire more and more.

"Then do you mean to say that this young lady is no relation of yours at all?" he exclaimed at last.

"None whatever. I have always called her my niece for convenience' sake. But her father was a Polish nobleman, who got involved in the last insurrection and was shot by the Russians. Vanda's mother was my first pupil, and when she was left alone, I took care of her for the few months she lived, and she left her child to me. All Count Lezinska's property was confiscated, but Vanda—the other Vanda, I mean—saved some of her jewels. I have all the papers and the jewels safe for her daughter."

"Then Miss Hether's real name is Lezinska?"

"Yes; and there is no question of her birth. She was educated at a school in Vienna, where only ladies of rank are admitted."

There was no doubt that Vanda's story had great weight with Mr. Hazlitt. He was a rich man, and cared little for the girl's property; but the connection with a poor music-teacher was not at all to his taste, and he did not wish his son to marry a foreigner, however well-born. But he told Mr. Hether he would consider the matter; and meanwhile Arthur was sent away for a week.

Mr. Hazlitt had a friend in the Foreign Office who knew a good deal about Eastern Europe; and to him the papers respecting Vanda were sent. His answer was prompt enough—

"You are to be congratulated," he wrote, "on your son's taste. I remember Count Lezinska well. He was killed in a skirmish in the last Polish insurrection, and his wife, who was a noted beauty in Warsaw, disappeared. I should say your boy was not likely to do better; and, if this young Countess has her mother's pearl necklace, that is a dowry of itself. As to the music master—he is not likely to cause any annoyance to the young people. He certainly seems to have behaved very well to the young lady."

After this letter Mr. Hazlitt decided to sanction the engagement; and, as Arthur's regiment was expected home in the autumn, just about the time his leave was up, there seemed no particular reason for postponing the wedding.

Mr. Hazlitt said openly that the sooner "poor Vanda" left her funny old guardian and came to them the better it would be for every one. But "dear Vanda" clung to her "Josef," and could see no reason for leaving him till her marriage, more especially as the preparations took up a good deal of her time.

Mr. Hether's ideas on the subject of trousseaux appeared very extravagant to Gertrude; but Vanda saw that it was his wish that her outfit should be of the best; and, as the girl evidently cared nothing about dress, it did not seem to be any one's business to preach economy.

To be sure, a certain old violin, which Mr. Hether kept in his bed-room, and produced on very great occasions, had been packed up and sent off to London one day when Vanda was out driving with the Hazlitts; but she never missed it, and it never occurred to her that the precious old "Strad." paid for her wedding finery.

Mr. Hazlitt made no inquiries about the jewels Josef had mentioned, though his curiosity on the subject was great; but when Vanda appeared on her wedding day adorned with the pearl necklace that had been worn by many generations of Lezinskas, there was no doubt as to its beauty and value; and Collington society was more excited than ever about the music-master's ward, who was better born and more splendidly attired than any of the ladies who had looked down upon her.

To the bride herself the pearls were simply a legacy from the mother she had lost in babyhood, and no thought of their value mingled with the pleasure she felt in wearing the ornaments Josef had so carefully preserved for her.

She was too simple and too happy to trouble herself about anything but the fact that she was united to the man she loved, and she never noticed how pale Josef looked as he embraced her for the last time, and led her to the carriage which was to take her out of his world into a new one.

It was Gertrude who laid her hand upon the music-master's arm as the carriage drove away and said:

"You will stay with us this evening, will you not, Mr. Hether? Vanda told me to take care of you when she was gone."

"You are very kind, Miss Hazlitt," Josef said, trying to smile; "but I am a fish out of water among your friends. I shall be better at home with my violin."

* * * * * *

When the bride and bridegroom returned from their honeymoon, Vanda's first inquiry was for Josef; but Gertrude could only tell her that he had continued giving lessons as usual till a few days before she was expected and had then started for his holiday. Then she added.

"He told me to tell you that he was sorry to miss you, but he had an engagement abroad. He has left a letter for you, which is in your room."

It was a long letter, which told Vanda more about her own history than she had ever known before.

"And now, my child," it concluded, "I am going away. I loved your mother years ago, though she was far above me, and I count it as the honor of my life that she entrusted you to my care. From the time she first placed you in my arms you have been the joy of my life, and I cannot tell you how much happiness your love and kindness have given me. I want you to go on thinking kindly of her, and I do not want to be a trouble to you, so I am going away. I have procured an appointment in a foreign conservatoire, which will enable me to supply my few wants. Do not ask where it is. I would rather be quite alone now with my music. Farewell, my darling, and heaven bless you.

"Your old uncle and guardian,

"Josef."

There is a happy young wife in an old house in England, who has all that love and money can give her, and whose children often ask for stories about her early life, when she was cared for by the funny old man after whom her second son is named.

And far away, in a dull little German town, there is a professor of music, whose talents are bringing the conservatoire into note, and who is consequently honored and admired by the townspeople, who profit by the pupils he attracts.

He is generally supposed to care only for his pipe and his grand piano; but now and then a strange story is discussed by students, who say that years before Herr Hether aided a noble Polish lady to Russia, and devoted many years of his life to caring for her and her child.

Bric-a-Brac.

BIRTHDAYS.—New Year's Day is the birthday of every Japanese. On that day an infant is considered to be one year old, though he or she may have entered the world only a few weeks previous to its advent.

DECIDING DISPUTES.—When the Dyaks in Borneo have to decide a dispute, they give to each litigant a lump of salt of the same size to drop into water, and he whose lump dissolves first is deemed to be in the wrong. Or they put two live shell fish on a plate—one for each litigant—and squeeze lime juice over them; the verdict is given according to which man's mollusc stirs first.

PLAYTHINGS OF OLD.—It seems very odd to have unearthed the playthings as well as the tablets and weapons of antiquity; yet among the objects found recently in a necropolis in Egypt was a whole company of wooden soldiers, fifteen inches in height. The soldiers carry lances, and give, it is said, a good idea of the style of military equipment prevailing in the time of the Pharaohs.

BAGPIPES.—Bagpipes are generally ascribed to Scotland, where they have been in use for a long time; but it was an instrument upon which the ancient Greeks and Romans played. Nero is said to have performed upon it; and an old piece of Grecian sculpture represents a player on the bagpipes dressed in the fashion that is known to-day as the Highland costume.

STRAIGHT AND CROOKED.—The straight line is an abomination to the Chinese. They endeavor to avoid it in their streets and buildings, and they have banished it completely where country field-paths are concerned. They will always substitute a curve wherever possible, or they will torture it with a zig-zag. To the Chinese mind the straight line is suggestive of death and demons.

BOTTLED TEARS.—The Persians still adhere to the old custom of bottling tears. In that country it constitutes an important part in the funeral ceremonies performed over the dead. Each of the mourners is presented with a sponge with which to mop the face and eyes, and after the burial these sponges are collected by a priest, who squeezes the tears into bottles. Mourners' tears are believed to be the most efficacious remedy that can be applied in many forms of disease.

NORWAY BRIDES.—With the peasantry in Norway marriage is celebrated with many gay ceremonies. The peasant-woman in that country may satisfy her vanity, if she is so disposed, by appearing one day in her life in a dress worthy of a queen; for each parish is supplied with a set of ornaments, etc., for the temporary use of brides whose condition in life is such as to prevent their indulging in finery of their own.

AS TO DOGS.—In an entertaining narrative of a residence in Dahomey, a recent writer furnishes an interesting account of a peculiar custom which is observed by the Dahomans during one of their annual state ceremonies. He remarks that being disturbed one night by several yelps, as if a dog were being beaten, he inquired into the matter the next morning, and was told that on the first night of the custom or ceremony all the dogs that can be caught by the night watchman are slaughtered; "for it is a fact well-known by every Dahoman but concealed no doubt for wise reasons by Providence from white men, that on the first night of any 'custom' the dogs assemble in the streets and try to talk like men. If they were once to succeed, they would call down various plagues and pestilences upon the nation."

BETTER THINGS.

A youth with thoughtful brow and earnest eye,
Up Learning's Mountain bravely plodded on,
Towards that fair height he has set his heart upon,
Fame's glowing mount that towers against the sky—
When poverty's black clouds o'er his horizon spread,
High aims must all give place to toil for bread;
He sees not from this seeming ill what good will spring,
How 'tis God's preparation for some better thing;
God's way of fitting him for work more high—
A broader life, a grander destiny.

An earnest soul, seeking the good and true, a heart
Yearning all wistfully that it might also find
A portion of the love and work that seem to bind
About all other lives, leaving hers out—apart;
Watching while other lives float on, into the gleam,
Praying to see good in what dark doth seem;
Learning in loneliness closer to Christ to cling,
And thus God giveth her a better thing;
Life-work she found, 'twas set before her plain,
And who dare say her other prayer was vain?

How often it is so, we cannot understand
Why prayers are not answered, why God should
Our heart's wish so deny! we ask but what is good;
We see not how 'tis so He leads us by the hand,
How so, past unknown snares, He tenderly doth guide,
Safe to that home where hearts are satisfied.
Our yearnings, what are they but angels' wings,
Bearing us upwards unto better things?
And when Heaven's door seems closed against our prayer
'Tis oft that some more precious thing God holdeth there.

WON AT LAST.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A TERRIBLE PENALTY," "HIS DEAREST SIN," "MISS FORRISTER'S LAND STEWARD," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXI.—(CONTINUED).

DECIMA'S heart sank, and she stared at the woman aghast.

"I did not know," she said. "I have just come up from the country, and expected to find my aunt here."

"'Ave you now, miss?" said the charwoman. "'Ow disappointin'! You must be the Miss Decima as the maids is always talkin' about?"

"Yes," said Decima, droopingly. "When do you expect Lady Pauline back?"

"Well, I don't rightly know, miss," was the reply.

"It's too late to go to Walfield to-night," said Decima, more to herself than to the woman.

"Yes, it is, miss. And, of course, you can sleep here; I can get a room ready for you in no time."

Decima's heart rose a little.

"Thank you," she said. "I will stay here to-night, and go on to Walfield to-morrow. I ought to have telegraphed."

"Which it would have been safer, miss," said the charwoman, taking up Decima's bag. "I'm afraid I haven't got anythink in the 'ouse fit for you to eat," she added, as Decima followed her. "But I can make you a cup of tea."

Decima stopped short. She had suddenly remembered Bobby.

"Wait!" she said. "My brother is in London. He is living at Prince's Mansions. I will go straight to him; he will bring me back here to-night. Where is Prince's Mansions?"

The woman said she did not know, but that any cabman would find it; and eventually Decima found herself in a hansom, rattling towards the rooms Lord Gaunt had lent Bobby.

A page opened the door to her, and gazed at her, after the manner of his kind, when she inquired for Mr. Deane.

"I don't know whether he's in, miss," he said, "but I'll step up and see."

"I will come, too," said Decima. "I am his sister."

The page opened the outer door of Gaunt's flat, and Decima followed him through the hall into the drawing or sitting-room.

A fire was burning in the gate; there was an odor of cigarettes. The page looked round.

"Mr. Deane ain't here, miss; but I expect he'll be here directly."

"Very well," said Decima. "I will wait."

She sat down in a chair beside the fire, and looked round the room. It was beautifully warm, and its luxury and air of taste and refinement struck upon her gratefully. She noticed the exquisite pictures, the rare bronzes, the fur rugs of leopard and bear skins. Then she remembered that the room was Lord Gaunt's; that he had lived there; and a strange feeling stole over her.

Presently there came a soft knock at the door, and a maid—a neatly-dressed London maid, in black alpaca, with white cap, and long strings—entered with some tea-things.

"Wouldn't you like to take your things off, miss?" she said, respectfully. "And I have brought you some tea."

Decima assented, gratefully, and the maid led her into Bobby's bedroom—that is to say, Lord Gaunt's. Decima looked round with a curious feeling as the maid helped her to remove her outdoor things, and went for some hot water.

There was an odor of cigarettes in his room also. A dress suit of Bobby's lay folded on a chair; a peculiar perfume arose from it—it struck Decima unpleasantly. A copy of a sporting paper was on a chair beside the bed, as if Bobby had thrown it down just before going to sleep. There were etchings on the wall, delicate, delightful bits of art which reminded her of Lord Gaunt, as Bobby's clothes, and the cigarette fumes, and the sporting paper had reminded her of Bobby.

She washed her hands and face, and brushed her soft, wavy hair, and went back to the sitting-room. The maid had placed the tea-service on a gipsy table in front of the fire; and Decima poured herself out a cup, looking round the room, musingly, and with intense interest.

It seemed to her eloquent of Lord Gaunt. Her mind dwelt upon him. He had lived in this room; had sat in this very chair, perhaps; had drunk out of this very cup. Where was he now? she wondered.

She sighed, and leant back. If only he had been here! She could have told him of her trouble. He could have helped her, advised her. Not for the first time, her heart ached with a yearning for his presence.

She rose, and went round the room, looking at the various articles upon the tables and cabinets. There was a strange mixture—a carving in ivory, a bronze medallion; an illuminated missal lay cheek and jowl beside a well-used Persian pipe. Upon the walls hung swords and spears—not the ornaments you buy in Wardour Street, but weapons which had been used, and still bore stains of blood. She touched one with her finger, and shuddered.

Yes; the room was eloquent of him. She got round to the mantelshelf at last. It, too, was crowded with bric-a-brac; but one thing amongst them attracted and chained her attention. It was the portrait—a cabinet photograph of a woman's face and bust. It was a beautiful face; more than beautiful—fascinating. A dark face, of perfect oval, with dark eyes, which smiled witchingly, fascinatingly, as did the small full lips. She wore a low-necked dress—very low—and the white neck and bust shone snow-like against the dark hair and eyes.

Decima looked at it, and, as she looked, a strange repulsion took possession of her.

The face was beautiful, fascinatingly; but to Decima the beauty was repellant, the witchery unholy. The face jarred upon her, and yet she could not take her eyes from it. It was enclosed in a costly frame. She took it in her hand, and studied the face—her brows drawn straight.

Who was it? Some friend of Bobby's—or Lord Gaunt's?

While the photograph was in her hand she heard the hall door open, and she raised her head, listening expectantly. Steps came along the hall, a hand turned the handle of the door.

"Bobby!" she almost exclaimed aloud, and she put the photograph hurriedly, face downwards, upon the mantelshelf, and went to meet him, with a smile on her face.

The door opened, and a tall figure in a fur coat entered. It was too tall for Bobby, but for a moment she did not recognize him; then, as he turned from closing the door and presented his face to her, she saw that it was Lord Gaunt.

She shrank back, her outstretched arms falling to her side. He looked at her, stopped short, then, exclaiming "Good God, Decima!" came towards her.

CHAPTER XXII.

"DECIMA!"

He stood stock-still and gazed at her as if she were a ghost, a vision called up by his longing desire for her.

He was thin, and his face looked worn and haggard and white against the dark thick fur of the coat; and there was an expression almost of dread in his eyes as they dwelt on her face.

He had been in Scotland, far up in Sutherlandshire, quite alone, wandering in the wilds, going through the pretence of fishing, shooting, fighting against the mad love which consumed him, as men fight vainly against the flames which spring up afresh against the beating hands.

And at last he had acknowledged himself beaten, had resolved to leave England for ever. He would go without a word of farewell—as he had often gone before—and leave no trace behind him.

He had booked his passage, the vessel sailed on the morrow; and he had come to his rooms to get his gun and other weapons necessary for the killing of big game, which he hoped and prayed would divert his mind, and help him to kill the memory of his girl-love.

He should never see her again! And now, here she stood before him—within reach of his hand—unless she were indeed only a wraith of herself, a vision, a ghost!

His breath—it had seemed to cease—came again quickly, but he could not speak, though his lips formed her name again.

The blood had rushed to Decima's face, something warm seemed to run through her veins, a swift, sudden joy leapt in her heart,

"Lord Gaunt! Is it really you?" she said, at last.

And her voice rang like soft music in his ears. It was the sound he had been thirsting for all these weary, weary weeks. How often, in fancy, had he heard it in the great solitude amongst the mountains!

"Yes, it is I!" he responded, as if to assure himself that he was awake and not dreaming. "What—why are you here?"

He did not offer to shake hands—did not move towards her, but still stood gazing at her. And she, for her part, stood still also, her hand resting on the back of the chair.

"I—I came to see Bobby," she said.

He looked round.

"He is not here?"

"No," she said. "He is out; he is coming back presently, they say. Where have you come from; does he expect you?"

"No," he said. "I have come from Scotland—from Sutherlandshire."

Mechanically, slowly, like a man in a dream, he took off his huge fur coat and dropped it on the couch, and came towards the fire.

Decima looked at him, and saw more plainly as the firelight played on his face how worn and haggard he looked.

"Have—have you been ill?" she asked, timidly.

"Ill? No!" he replied.

He raised his head, and glanced at her. He scarcely dared to look long at her lest the desire to take her in his arms should get the better of him.

"And—and you? You look—you are thinner, paler. Have you been ill?"

"No," she said, simply. "I am quite well. What have you been doing all—all this time?"

"Fishing, shooting," he said. "'All this time.' Does it seem so long?"

"Yes, very long," she replied, with the ghost of a sigh, as she looked at the fire. "How long is it? I—I scarcely remember. Why—why did you go so suddenly, Lord Gaunt?"

He caught his breath to keep back the words. "Because I loved you. Because I should have gone mad if I had stayed!" Then he said aloud, with a low, strained laugh—

"I wanted a change."

Decima nodded.

"And have you enjoyed it?"

"Very much!" he said, with bitter irony.

There was silence for a moment. The antique clock, with its figures of relentless time moving down the minutes with his scythe, ticked mockingly.

"And—and what is the news from Leafmore? Is your father well?"

"Yes," she said.

"And—and Bright, and the rest?"

He put the commonplace question in a dull, mechanical fashion.

"Yes," she said again. Then she glanced at him. "It has gone on as it—as if you had been there. The schools are nearly finished. They look very pretty, and—and—— But you will see them, will you not?"

"I don't know," he said, absently.

He was listening to her voice rather than to her words—drinking it in. He was trying to realize that she was here, close by him, alone—alone!—with him.

"My—my movements are rather uncertain."

"Have you only just come from Scotland?" she asked, glancing at the fur coat—at his tired face.

"Yes," he said; "this moment."

"You must be tired! Will you let me give you some tea?" She laughed softly, timidly. "That sounds strange—asking you in your own house! Shall I—may I ring for some more water?"

"No, no," he said, quickly. He did not want the maid—anyone—to come in; did not want any other voice than hers in the rooms. "That will do."

"It is quite hot still," she said. She poured out a cup for him, and carried it to him; he had not moved or offered to go to the table.

He took it from her with a slight inclination of the head, and his hand, in transferring the cup, just touched hers. He stood holding the cup, as if he had forgotten it.

"Won't you sit down?" she said. "I have got your chair. Will you not come into it? You see I am forgetting that this is your room and your chair."

He shook his head, and drew a chair forward, quite close to the fire, and signed to her to take the big one.

She sat down, her hands resting on her lap, her eyes fixed on the blaze as it rose and fell fitfully, one moment lighting up their faces, the next casting them into shadow.

Gradually the wan look was leaving his face, a light began to dawn in his eyes. Her presence, her nearness, was having its effect upon him. He could hear her even breathing, could feel, though he did not look at her, the eyes he loved so passionately glancing at him now and again.

She was here—here by his side, his dear, sweet girl-love. He forgot all else. The silence did not seem irksome or embarrassing; it was as if his thoughts spoke, and no lip language were necessary. But at last he said:

"And so all is going on well at Leafmore?"

"Yes," she said, with a slight start. Upon her, too, a kind of peace—a lull in the storm—had fallen. "Yes; Mr. Bright has been working very hard——"

"Which means that you have also!" he said in a low voice.

"And a very great deal has been done. You will be surprised at the change, at the improvement! Mr. Bright says that it will be the model village—the example for the rest of England. He is very proud of it, and the people—ah, you should hear what they say! It would make you very happy, Lord Gaunt!"

"Would it?" he said, slowly. "And you—are you happy—content?"

She winced slightly, as one winces when a hand touches, though gently, a wound forgotten for the moment.

"I am quite content," she said, ignoring the "happy." Why, have you not done all I—Mr. Bright and the people wanted! Yes, quite content and satisfied."

"Then I am also," he said, gravely.

"Will you have some more tea?" she asked. "And will you not eat something—some bread and butter?"

"Only some tea, please;" he said. She filled his cup again, and he took it, looking at her as he did so. Was it fancy on his part, or had the lovely face grown less pale, the eyes less sad?

She leant back, and glanced up at the clock.

"Bobby has not come yet," she said, reflectingly. "I wonder how long——" Then, as it it had suddenly occurred to her, "Oh, Lord Gaunt, had I not better go? I—I must be in your way!" She said it quite frankly, and her eyes sought his face innocently, as one man's might seek another's, and she rose.

He put out his hand, and almost touched her.

"No, no!" he said. "Do not go. Stay! Bobby will be here directly, no doubt. How long have you been in London?" He went on as if by talking he could keep her.

"Only this afternoon," she said. "I have only just come up. I came up suddenly, unexpectedly." Her voice faltered, and her face grew grave.

She remembered—it came upon her like a flash—the reason for the journey; and the remembrance clouded over her unconscious joy in his presence.

"I found that Aunt Pauline was not in London—she is at her country house—and I came on here to spend the evening with Bobby. I am going to aunt Pauline's to sleep."

"I see," he said. "Why did you come to me so suddenly?"

She was silent a moment. Why could she not tell him? And yet she could not.

"I wanted to see her," she said, in a low voice.

"Is—is anything the matter?" he asked, noting her sudden gravity, the cloud on her face.

"Yes," she said. "At least something has been the matter. We—father—has been in great trouble——"

"Trouble!" he repeated, intently. "What trouble?"

She sighed.

"He has lost a great deal of money, and at first we thought, we feared, that —— But it does not matter now." Her voice was very still and subdued. "It is all over now—all put straight."

"Why did you not tell me," he began almost fiercely.

Then he stopped as she looked at him with faint surprise.

"I would have told you," she said, simply, not reproachfully. "But I did not know where you were—no one knew."

"No; that is true! Forgive me," he said, almost inaudibly.

She had been in trouble and in need of him, and had not been able to come to him. What a brute he had been!

"And you would have come to me?" he said, rather huskily.

"Yes," she said, simply, but a little timidly. "There was no one else; and—and you are always so kind. You would have told me what to do, advised me, would you not?"

"Yes," he said, still more huskily, "I would—God knows how gladly!"

"Thank you," she said; and the sweetness of her voice hurt him. "But it does not matter now. It is all over."

"I am glad," he said; "and yet sorry that—that I hadn't a hand in getting rid of the trouble. Are you sure that it is past—done with?"

"Yes, quite," she said, in the same still voice.

She put her hand up before her face, as if the fire were burning it. He rose, and took a Japanese screen from the mantelshelf—his hand touched the portrait lying face downwards—and gave it to her.

And with a murmured thanks she took it and screened her face. Relentless time again broke the silence with his sweeping scythe.

"How did your father come to lose this money?" asked Gaunt.

Decima turned her face as if her thoughts had been wandering from the subject.

"I don't quite know. It was through some speculation, something to do with one of his inventions. Mr. Mershon and he started a company, I think——"

"Mershon!" Gaunt started, and looked at her earnestly. "Was he in it? How did he—ah, I remember! And your father lost his money? I can well believe it! I don't know much of Mr. Mershon, but I should say——"

"Oh, hush!" she broke in, looking up at him as if she dreaded the next words. "You must not say—I must not listen to anything against him!"

Gaunt stopped, and stared at her with a frown.

"Why not?" he said—demanded, rather.

The color rose to her face, then left it pale again. She raised her eyes to his with a world of sad resignation in them.

"I am going to be his wife," she said, in a low voice.

Gaunt did not move for a moment, but sat like one suddenly turned to stone. Then his face broke up, as it were, and he rose and stood before her.

"Going—to—be—his—wife?" he repeated hoarsely. His own voice sounded like a muffled bell, the room span round with him. His love for her, his jealousy, rose about him like a great wave of fire, and swept over him, scorching him as it passed. "You are going to marry him?"

She looked up at him with a faint wonder in her sad eyes.

"Yes," she said, almost inaudibly; for his face, his voice, frightened her.

He turned from her and walked to the end of the room. Then he came back and stood over her, a tall figure, almost threatening in its aspect.

"Do—do you love him?"

She was silent, and his face grew darker, fiercer. "Answer me! You can answer me! Yes, or no!"

She rose, drawn to her feet by the stress of his emotion and her answering to it.

"No!" her lips formed.

He drew a long breath.

"Then—then why——"

He stopped, as if the words choked him.

She stood downcast and trembling.

"He—he helped us. We should have been penniless. Bobby——"

He saw it all in an instant.

"My God!" broke from his strained lips. "Child!"—he caught her arm in an iron grip—"do you know—realize—what it is you are doing? Marry Mershon! You!"

His gasp hurt her, but she made no attempt to release her arm as she looked up at him piteously and with faint surprise.

"Why—why are you so angry with me?" she faltered. "How could I help it? He said that it—if I married him he would pay this money, and—and help Bobby. And—and I said 'Yes,' at last. I could not have taken this money from him without—he would not have given it. And—and it does not matter what becomes of me so that they are safe and —and happy——"

His grasp tightened, and she winced; but he was all unconscious of the pain he was inflicting. His own agony was too great. The thought that she was to be the wife of another man—and that man, Mershon!—was rending his heart in twain; every nerve was stretched and strained on a rack. And her admission that she did not love the man increased the torture.

She looked up at him, at his set face and gleaming eyes, with a questioning terror.

"Why—why are you so angry—why do you care so?" she faltered.

A shudder ran through him, and the set rigidity of his face relaxed, melted, so to speak.

"Good gracious, child, don't you know?" he said, hoarsely.

In her innocence she drew a little nearer to him.

"Is it because you—you like me, because we have been such friends, that you are so sorry for me?" she said. "Perhaps——" She stopped and smiled —a woeful, little smile.

"Go on! Speak from your heart; hide nothing from me!" he commanded, insisted, hoarsely.

"Perhaps, if I had come to you, and—and told you of our trouble, you would have married me," she said, simply. "I —I think you like me, Lord Gaunt. And I could not have taken the money unless—unless I had been your wife, could I?"

A groan broke from his white lips. Fate was too many for him. He had fled from temptation, but temptation is fleet of foot, and it had overtaken him, and had got him under its heel.

"Child!" he said, in a low, thick voice. "Don't you know? Haven't you seen? Can you not guess? I love you!"

She shrank—for even in him passion startled and awed her.

"You love——"

"I love you!" His voice broke on hers fiercely. "I love you, Decima! I have loved you from the beginning! No man ever loved any woman as I love you! You are the life of my life, the soul of my soul! Every thought is of you! You hold my heart in the hollow of your hands! It was because I loved you, passionately, madly, that I left you, fled from you!"

He stopped for breath, and caught her other hand and gripped it fast, as if he feared she would be torn from him there and then.

Decima stood quite still. She did not shrink from him; she was too overwhelmed by the storm of his passion to realize the meaning of his words.

Then, slowly, it came crushing down upon her, caught her as it in an embrace, enveloped her like a sun-warmed cloud. Her heart leaped, then beat heavily—a joy beyond the power of poor mortal words to limn, suffused her.

All in an instant a veil seemed to have been torn asunder, and she saw and knew what love meant, and that her love, with all it meant, had been given to him long, long ago. The pain of his grasp became an ecstasy.

She could have laughed aloud in her new-born joy, delight. But all she did was to gaze up at him as the devotee gazes upward at his god—the god which had power to deal out misery or joy unspeakable.

"You—love—me!" she said unconsciously.

Her voice thrilled through him and dispelled the last remnant of honor that clung to him despairingly.

"I love you!" he said. "You are just life to me! Decima, if you had not been as innocent as a child, you would have known it! Think—look back! Do you remember nothing—have you seen nothing? Why was I always with you? Why did I stay at Leafmore? Why did I do all—everything you wanted? Do men act like that unless they are in love? See!" He thrust his hand into his bosom and dragged out the ribbon which had fallen from her hair. "I have worn this next my heart, day and night, sleeping or waking. It has never left me. You had worn it?"

The blood rushed to her face, her eyes glowed with a pure passion, and she drew still nearer to him.

His arm went round her waist, and he crushed her against his heart, and, for the first time—the first time!—his lips sought hers, and kissed her.

She did not shrink, but lay in his embrace, her face upturned, flower-like, to his kisses.

"You are the whole wide world to me!" he said, hoarsely. "Life is not worth having without you! I cannot live without you! I thought I could! I have tried—but, you see, you know—I cannot! Decima, child, my dearest, tell me! Do you love me?"

She looked up at him, and the look sent a hot wave over him. Her lips parted, but for a moment no words would come. Then she said in a faint whisper which thrilled him—

"I love you!"

"Decima!"

She hid her face against his heart for a moment, then she raised her eyes to his.

"Yes; I know now! How—how stupid —how ignorant I was! I—I must have loved you all through—from the very first!"

He bent and kissed her hair passionately, yet reverently. Her avowal of love awed him. It was as if he had suddenly penetrated the sanctum sanctorum, the holy of holies, of some shrine. Her innocence cried aloud to him.

But his passion deafened him.

"Decima, since the day we met at Leafmore, I have loved you. Day by day that love has grown until it has become the master passion of my life. I have struggled with and fought against it; but Fate and Circumstances have been too many for me. You know the truth now, and—and I am not sorry!"

"Sorry!" Why should you be?" she said.

And love lent a sweeter music to her voice, so that he paused and listened before replying.

"I am not sorry. For us nothing matters—nothing is of consequence but our love. Nothing, no one, shall separate us, Decima?"

She smiled up at him, and her hand stole to his face with a womanly touch which thrilled him.

"No," she said. Then she started. "But—but Mr. Mershon? I have given my word—my promise!"

Her face grew grave and fearful. Gaunt laughed slowly—a laugh of scorn and defiance.

"A word wrung from you cozened by an artful scheme," he said. "What does it amount to? He—he bought, bribed you! Bah! I buy, bribe you! I'll do all he offered. He laughed and pressed her to him. "And I buy with love, love, love! My child, do you know now what you were about to do? To marry a man you did not love!"

"Yes!" she said. And a shudder shook her, so that she clung tighter to him. "I know now! Oh! how could I?"

"How could you?" he exclaimed, with a desperate, reckless laugh. "But that is all over, finished with, dearest. It is me—me—me whom you love! Are you glad, Decima? Tell me."

She drew a long breath. He was smoothing the tendrils of her soft hair from her forehead, was looking into her eyes with the hungry, craving look of love.

"I am glad," she responded, with innocent abandon.

"That is right!" he said. "And you shall never regret it, dearest—never! While I live I will spend my every hour in making you happy. You believe that —you trust me?"

"Yes!" she breathed. "But, think! Am I fit to be your wife——"

The word fell like a bolt from the blue. His wife! His face went white. But she went on, all innocently—

"You—you are so—so far above me. I am only Decima Beane——"

He laughed as he thrust the gruesome spectre of his past, of his bonds, away from him.

"You are, yes, Decima Beane—the girl I love—the one woman in the world to me. Oh, my darling, my darling!" His voice broke. "Decima, tell me: Am I awake, or dreaming?"

She raised her head from the pillow of his breast, and kissed him on the lips.

"Awake!" she breathed.

He returned the kiss fourfold.

"Listen, dearest!" he said. "To-night we will start for—for—anywhere! It does not matter where——"

She looked at him with a faint smile at first; then with as faint a questioning.

"Start? Why?"

He met her inquiring eyes; then looked aside.

"We must go away together," he said, hoarsely. "There—there will be some fuss and—and stir. We—will go to—yes, to Egypt, to Cairo!"

"Shall we be married there?" she asked, her innocent eyes on his face.

"Married?" The word echoed on his lips hoarsely. "What—what does it matter?"

The word again reminded him of his bondage, of the fact that he was married already. He thrust the remembrance from him once more. He would not remember it.

"You can trust me, dearest?" he said.

"Trust you?" she repeated after him, with a slight knitting of her brows. "What do you mean? I don't understand."

"See here, dearest," he said, his eyes falling before the innocent directness of hers. "There are circumstances—— It may be necessary that—— Would you come with me? Does it matter—whether we are married or not?"

With all her ignorance and innocence of the world and life's miserable mystery, Decima knew something of the sacredness, the necessity, of the marriage tie.

"I—I don't understand—it is very stupid of me," she faltered.

He turned white, and bit his lip.

"Suppose—I asked you to come with me without being married?" he said desperately. "Suppose there was some reason why—why—we could not be married like—like other persons? Would you risk—dare all; would you trust me, and—and come with me?"

She looked up at him with no fear in her eyes—nothing but a faint suspicion.

"I would go anywhere with you," she said; "I could not refuse!" She drew a long breath, and smiled up at him. "And why should I not? If we cannot be married, we can be friends—just as we have been at Leafmore. I was very happy there—ah, very happy! And I should see you every day, should I not? Perhaps Bobby could go with us? But I suppose not. He could not leave his work, could he, even for a time?"

Before her absolute innocence Gaunt quailed.

Aunt Pauline's system had been very thorough! He bit his lips, and, for the time, his eyes fell before her pure gaze.

"Come—come and sit down!" he said, huskily. He drew her to the big chair, but she signed to him to sit, and, sinking on the thick rug at his feet, she leant her arm on his knee, and her head on her arm. Gaunt stroked her hair with a trembling hand, and stared at the fire.

Conscience stung and lashed him, but its sting, its whip, fell upon a heart made insensible by poison. If, he argued to himself, he did not take her away, she would marry Mershon; he knew the pressure which would be brought to bear, knew that she would not be able to withstand it.

She would marry a man she did not love; and from such a hell, such a life in death, surely Gaunt, the man she loved, ought to snatch her at any cost. The happiness, the misery, of her life hung in the balance.

After all, would the wrong be very great. He could take her away to some land where she would not be likely to meet any people; they could hide themselves under assumed names; no breath of shame or reproach would touch her. He would watch over her happiness every hour of his life. And she should be happy.

And—and, perhaps Fate would take pity on them, and kill that other woman, his wife. Then he would marry Decima; and—and all would be well.

One knows what an admirable advocate the devil can be; and now he was pleading with Gaunt, not only for Gaunt himself, but for the girl he loved. He could not let her go.

"Decima," he said, and his voice sounded so labored that she raised her head and looked at him with some apprehension in her eyes, "I want you to understand. We must go—if we go alone; we could not take Bobby with us. Child, the world—everybody—will blame me for taking you."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

WITH CROSSED HANDS.

BY M. E. S.

O dainty love of mine,
The day is bright and fair!
The summer sunbeams shine,
O dainty love of mine,
On curls that stray and twine,
On curls of golden hair!
O dainty love of mine,
The day is bright and fair!

O love, the day is chill,
The sea beats on the shore,
The mist drives o'er the hill!
O love, the day is chill,
Sad tears your blue eyes fill—
We part for evermore!
O love, the day is chill,
The sea beats on the shore!

O lost love, cold and dead,
White hands crossed on your breast!
O shining golden head!
O lost love, cold and dead,
Laid on your snowy bed,
In peaceful dreamless rest!
O lost love, cold and dead,
White hands crossed on your breast!

Promised.

BY K. J. S.

"HOUSE full? Why, how much company have you, Louise?"

Mrs. Louise Anslie, our pretty little hostess, who was on her knees before my trunk, engaged in admiring my wardrobe while she chatted, turned immediately to my sister.

"My dear Julia, we are actually crammed," said she. "There hasn't been such a summer rush for The Maples since I can remember. First came the Athertons and Wilsons; then Hettie Latimer and her sister; then Harry Vernon, Charlie Wayne, Fred Lawton and his pretty little cousin, and consequently her ardent admirer, Mr. Maynard. I thought we were certainly full, and James was just saying, last night, that we could not possibly accommodate anybody else, when a carriage drove up, and out sprang Hugh Cheston."

"Hugh Cheston?" said I, my face flushing.

"Hugh Cheston?" exclaimed my elder sister, Gertrude, who was tumbling over the contents of her trunk in search of something. "Oh, I am delighted!"

"He's the best catch I know of, Louise," said Julia.

"Well, of course he had come to spend a week or two, and James was just as glad to see him as if there wasn't a soul in the house and we had whole suites of rooms," replied Mrs. Anslie; "but I was at my wits' ends for a place to put him in. But at last I remembered what a good little soul you are, Mattie, and so ventured to let him have the chamber I had reserved for you. You won't think it an imposition, will you, dear?"

"No, indeed. I can manage capitally with Julia," said I.

"It's very good of you. He's just returned from the continent," continued Louise, "(oh, what a love of a bertha, Mattie!)—and has brought home a French valet, who is almost as handsome as his master, and who is turning the head of every maid in the house. How delightful it is to hear them talk French—master and man! Mattie, where did you ever find this perfect trimming?"

"I haven't seen him for nearly five years," said Gertrude; "but I used to be desperately in love with him. Such handsome eyes as he had!"

"He is very rich, which is much more to the purpose," said Julia, whose twenty-six summers had brought her to appreciate the practical part of life. "Mattie, you homely little thing," she added, "what are you dreaming about?"

I got up from the floor where I had been sitting for the last ten minutes, with my hair about my shoulders, and went to the mirror. I did not want them to see what a bright color there was upon my cheeks.

My sisters were dressed in a few moments more, and went downstairs with Louise. When the sound of their voices had died away I threw myself upon the carpet by a chair and fell to dreaming.

Five years before—it did not seem so long—I had seen Hugh Cheston, and for the only time in my life. It was on the night of a party given at my father's house, in honor of my sister Gertrude's eighteenth birthday.

Little more than two years before I had lost my dear mother, and the idea of a crowd of gay people thronging the room where she had rested in her coffin on that last sad day, filled my childish heart with grief and indignation. But no one took any notice of me. I knelt there by the window of my little room, which was in a wing of the house and overlooked the terrace of the main building—my face wet with tears, and the most wretched feeling I had ever felt lingering around me.

Suddenly a light from the ball-room streamed out broadly upon the darkness, as some one drew the window drapery aside, and an instant after two persons stepped out upon the terrace. It was my sister Gertrude and a gentleman.

I could hear their words plainly as they passed backwards and forwards. They talked carelessly and gaily about a great many things, some of which I could understand, but others I could not. At last I was startled by the words of my sister's companion.

"What is that?" he said.

"What?" said my sister. "What do you mean, Mr. Cheston?"

"I thought I caught a glimpse of a child's face at that window," replied the gentleman. "And if I am not mistaken it was wet with tears."

I drew back quickly with a beating heart, but I heard my sister say, "Oh, 'tis Mattie, my little sister, I suppose. The child is averse to our giving this party to-night, and declares that we are all heartless and forgetful of my dear mother. Of course, as you are aware, the idea is very absurd, but no one could make her believe it, and she has shut herself up in her room and cried all day."

Gertrude had told the truth. These were just the facts of the case. If her words had called forth a smile from her companion, I should have hated him forever; but peeping carefully from behind the curtain, I saw his face as he passed by the lighted windows, and it was as grave and gentle as I could have wished. He made Gertrude no reply.

A few moments afterwards they stepped through the window into the room again. Leaning back into my old place I dropped my head into my hands and fell to thinking, but not of my troubles. Suddenly I was startled by hearing my name called. After a moment's bewildered hesitation, I leaned forward and looked out. Mr. Cheston was standing alone upon the terrace.

"Won't you come down a moment?" he said, smiling at my frightened face. "I want to talk with you."

Springing up, I left my room, and tripping lightly down the stairs, stepped through the hall-door upon the terrace, and stood before him with a beating heart. He took my hand, and stooping down looked kindly into my face.

"What have you been crying for?" he said, gently.

"You know," I replied, laconically.

"So I do, little Mattie," he said, smilingly; "and I called you down because I wished to tell you that I don't think you foolish at all, as the others do, and that I'm very sorry for you."

I allowed him to kiss me, which was a liberty I should indignantly have resented under any other circumstances.

"In a few months I am going away, and shall be gone for several years," he said, after a pause, during which he looked keenly but kindly into my downcast face. "When I come back, you will be a young lady, Mattie."

"I know it," said I. "And I'm very sorry for it."

"For what reason?" he asked.

"Because I don't like young ladies," I replied.

"Why not?" he asked.

"They are so foolish," I said. "They talk about nothing else but dress, and gentlemen, and parties, and are always the crossest people in the world to me."

The idea that Mr. Cheston was laughing at me flashed into my mind as I finished speaking; but glancing up quickly into his face, I saw that it was unusually grave.

"Your opinion of your sex is not a very flattering one, however truthful it may be," he said. "Do you believe all young ladies are like these, whom you see every day?"

"I don't know," I said.

"Do you think it necessary that they should be?" he asked.

"No, sir," I said, "for I don't think my mother was such a young lady."

"Don't you think that you could grow up to be a sensible, useful woman, if you were to try?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," said I.

"Will you try?" he asked.

"I will," was my earnest reply.

"And I hope you may succeed, my dear Mattie, both for your sake and my own," said Mr. Cheston. "Now I must leave you. Will you kiss me good-bye?"

I astonished myself very much by the act, when I pressed my lips to his, as he bent down. Something in my face attracted his attention a moment after, and he laughed.

"You're a queer little thing," he said. "What would you tell me if I were to ask you if you liked me?"

"The truth, of course," I replied.

"Then I'll spare your blushes, you remarkable morsel of womanhood," he said. "But, Mattie," he continued, more seriously, "will you kiss me when I come back?"

"Yes, sir," said I.

"You will be a young lady then, remember," said he.

"But I shall be myself just the same," I said.

"So you will," said he. "I shall hold you to your promise. Remember it. Now, good-bye."

He turned away as some one came upon the terrace, and I sprang through the hall door, and flew back to my room. And this was the scene I was thinking over as I sat upon the floor of my room at the beautiful country seat of the Anslies—a girl of seventeen, dark, plain, shy and sensitive.

"Mattie, what for mercy's sake are you doing that you are not dressed yet? 'Tis nearly dinner-time," said my sister Julia, dashing into the room for something, and stopping short as her eyes fell upon me. "Have you been asleep?"

"No," said I, sullenly, getting up and going to the mirror.

"Oh, you queer child!" said she. "Now do be quick. You'll find me in the drawing-room if you ever get ready to come down," and out she swept.

I think there are few persons in the world who can understand what I suffered when I entered the room where Mr. Cheston was. Everything was a blank to me as I crossed to the window where my sisters sat.

I realized nothing in existence but the heavy pulsations of my heart which seemed as if they would beat out my life. When I came to my senses I was sitting by good Mrs. Wilson, who was always kind to me, and whom I sometimes thought I loved better than either Julia or Gertrude.

"You did not expect to see so many people, dear, and were frightened," she said, with a smile on her kind, motherly face. "I saw it the moment you opened the door."

I answered only with a glance, and slipped my hand into hers.

"Mrs. Wilson," said my sister Gertrude, "if Mr. Cheston comes this way again I want you to take Mattie round to the other side of you. You will, won't you?"

"No, my dear; that's very ungenerous of you," replied Mrs. Wilson. "I shall warn Mr. Cheston that you have serious designs on him."

"I don't see the necessity of warning a person against a danger of which he is already aware," snapped a young lady with very black eyes, who stood behind the sofa on which we sat.

Gertrude turned round with a crimson face.

"What is the subject of discussion? Won't you admit me to your confidence, ladies?" said a familiar voice, so near my ear that I started in affright.

The black-eyed young lady slipped aside to give Mr. Cheston a place near us. Several persons were presented to him; I among others. He paid me no particular attention, and took a chair beside Gertrude.

"Didn't you inquire what we were talking about, Mr. Cheston?" said the black-eyed young lady.

"I believe I had the audacity to do so," he replied, smiling. But the smile was very different from the one I remembered to have seen upon his face.

"We were speaking of kisses," said Gertrude, quickly, with a saucy smile. "And Hattie Latimer declared that she didn't believe you cared for them."

I stared. I had never before heard my sister utter a deliberate falsehood.

"I am very sorry that Miss Latimer thinks me so indifferent to the most perfect luxury in life," he replied, glancing up at her.

"Victory, Hattie! Mr. Cheston does believe in kisses," said Gertrude, with a smile so bright as to dazzle the eyes, so that but two of us saw the hidden malice.

I think Miss Hattie was about making an attempt to struggle out of the position into which my sister had thrust her; but Louise Anslie, who had sauntered up a moment before, exclaimed, "Oh, Mr. Cheston, don't you remember that you once attended a forfeit party, and wore the most dissatisfied face I ever saw in my life, all the evening?"

"But, Mrs. Anslie, that was because I consider forfeits a sacrilege of the caress," he replied. "It is converting the beautiful into the useful, and ruining its peculiar value by so doing. I regret, however, that my face betrayed my feelings. I assure you that the rudeness was not intentional."

"Mr. Cheston is apparently unconscious that several ladies are looking at him very admiringly," said a low voice near me.

I turned round. It was Mr. Maynard, who was in a fever of jealousy because Rose Lawson's bright eyes were fixed upon the gentleman in question.

"Take care, Mr. Cheston," cried Gertrude. "I'm afraid you don't know what you are bringing upon yourself. Having declared yourself so much in favor of the 'most perfect luxury in life,' we young ladies may have you quite at our mercy. According to your assertion, I doubt if you could resist the reward of a kiss from a pretty girl who might be suing for a favor. Could you?"

"Yes," he replied.

"How so?" she asked.

"Because a kiss given in that way would be of little value," said Mr. Cheston.

"I think that a very unkind speech, coming as it does from the lips of a man who is well aware that kisses are a lady's favorite bribe," replied Gertrude, flushed, but laughing. "It is a most ungallant speech. Mr. Cheston, you must stand trial for punishment."

"I will make it short by choosing Rose Lawton for my judge," he replied, laughing, and glancing up into the smiling eyes of the little beauty.

"Your chastisement shall be to confess whom you kissed last," said she gaily.

"That is not fair," he said.

"Why?" she demanded, quickly.

"Because," said he, "the lady is present, and the punishment would fall rather upon her than me." Whereupon, they all burst into a merry laugh.

"Well then, you can tell whom you intend to kiss next," said Rose.

"That will not do, either," said he. "I should never be able to put my intentions into effect."

"Do you keep an account of your kisses as you do of your expenses, Cheston?" called out Mr. Maynard.

"Yes," replied Mr. Cheston, quietly.

"Now I have it!" cried Rose Lawton. "You shall tell us how many ladies you have kissed during the last five years."

"I will do so, on condition that my word shall not be doubted," he said, gravely.

"We will believe you, certainly," said Rose. "Now listen, good folks!"

"Not one," said Mr. Cheston, quietly; upon which everybody looked astonished.

"Oh, Mr. Cheston, you amaze us!" cried Rose.

"Hugh is probably faithful to some fair lady who favored him some time before," said Mr. Anslie, who had been listening quietly for a few moments.

"Exactly," said Mr. Cheston, rising with a bow, and turning away to some one who had called him impatiently.

Oh, the significant glances and exclamations of wonder that were circulated through the group after his departure!

"And what are you thinking of, little mouse?" said Mrs. Wilson, bending towards me. "Your cheeks are as red as roses."

She would have been overwhelmed with astonishment if I had told her.

* * * * *

Three weeks passed, and Mr. Cheston and I were on no more intimate terms than we had been on that first evening. We rarely met except at the table or in the drawing-room of an evening, and he seldom addressed me when we did met. By degrees I overcame my shyness and sensitiveness regarding him.

He had forgotten, I thought, the romantic incident of my childhood, which had always had such a charm for me, and I wondered at myself for ever supposing that he had remembered it beyond the moment.

It made me a little sad to know that all my pleasant thoughts concerning it were castles in the air, and slightly humiliating, taken in connection with his polite indifference to me, to know that those thoughts were so many.

Mr. Cheston was a great lion among the party at "The Maples." The ladies all liked him; the gentlemen were jealous of him while they strove to imitate him.

My sister Gertrude declared privately that she was seriously in love with him. Everybody talked of him; everybody admired him; either secretly or openly.

The summer wore gradually away. Several of our party had returned home, and one clear September morning Mr. Cheston informed Mr. Anslie at the breakfast table, that he should be obliged to return to town the next morning. It frightened me to know how shocked and pained I was, and at the first opportunity I rose and left the room.

That evening, when the drawing-room was deserted by the few that remained of the gay company, and I could hear their voices far down the moonlit park, I strolled into the dark, silent room, and sank upon a cushioned window-seat. Instantly some one started up in the dusky light, and coming forward, sat down beside me. It was Mr. Cheston.

"Mattie," said he, "I intend going away before six o'clock to-morrow morning, and shall probably not see you again." I did not reply; and he continued—"Haven't I a right to ask for a good bye kiss?"

The light was not so dim but that I could see a laughing light in his eyes.

"You have the right which the promise of a child gives you, I suppose," I replied, somewhat annoyed by his light manner. It was so little for him to say good-bye to me. It was so much for me to say good bye to him.

"A child in years you certainly were, Mattie, but more of a woman at heart than thousands twice your age," said he. "Do you know that you made a conquest of me, little one, when you kissed me upon the terrace in the darkness that night?"

"A conquest?" I said, startled.

"I carried that kiss away with me," he replied. "I loved the remembrance of it as I did my life. I would not have parted with it for all the wealth in the world, for it was a sweet hope on which hung all my light of the future. The lips of no other woman have pressed to mine since then. I said to myself that, until I kissed another, your kiss remained. Do you understand?"

My eyes were full of tears, but I tried to smile.

"You were a sweet child, Mattie," he continued, "and have grown into a sweet woman—such a woman as I have been waiting to find that I might marry. Now I ask you for that promised kiss, and if you give it to me I shall take it for granted that you give me yourself with it."

Mr. Cheston was sure of what I had never acknowledged to myself—my love for him. I felt it in the confident clasp of his arm; I saw it in the confident glances of his eyes; and, content that he should read the heart of which he was so certainly the master, I acted my simple self, and gave him the promised kiss.

Two White Roses.

BY H S

PARIS is a rich city, and proud of its riches. Its treasures are countless, its luxuries boundless; and its widespread mantle wants but one thing to complete its splendor, and that is—flowers. It would hardly be believed that there is a scarcity of flowers in Paris; but it is nevertheless true.

To be sure, there is a flower-market in this opulent city, where ladies procure their elegant camellias, gardenias, and bouquets.

The botanist goes there for his rare tulip, and the grisette for her pot of violets or mignonette. But these flowers, like many other Parisian productions, have but a fictitious existence; they are temporarily supported by the artificial heat introduced into the pots, but soon droop and fade away.

The purchaser, who thought he possessed a living and healthy bloom, finds, upon his return home, that he is the owner of a sickly, faded flower—a fit emblem of the fleeting pleasures of the world. It should be added, for the credit of Paris, that there are also several magnificent temples dedicated to Flora.

In some of the most magnificent streets of the city may be seen splendid shops, kept by beautiful and bewitching young women, in which there are handsome miniature altars erected to this goddess.

There you will find the budding rose, whose tints resemble the first blush of a modest maiden; the lily—emblem of purity—with its golden petals and alabaster cups; the moss-rose, the favorite flower of the poets; in a word, a representative of the whole floral kingdom.

There you will find a cloud of incense, from which the garland of the queen of flowers gathers its perfume. Still, the supply of flowers is greatly disproportionate to the other luxuries of the French metropolis.

Winter flowers, especially, are very rare, and botanists alone know the great labor which their production costs. They require a pent-up heat, of even temperature, and the most unwearied watchfulness and attention.

Mademoiselle Pascaline Benoit was one of the most renowned florists in Paris. She was an enthusiast in her profession.

She was very poor, but she cultivated her flowers with a poetic zeal, which excited the admiration of all who knew her. Her little garden, situated at the outskirts of the city, always contained some prodigy of the vegetable kingdom.

It was midwinter. A smart equipage drew up and stopped in front of Pascaline's door. An elegant-looking matron and a charming young lady alighted from the carriage. It was the Marchioness de Regenial and her daughter.

"Mademoiselle," said the marchioness, "my daughter is to be married the day after to-morrow, and we wish a white rose for her wedding dress. I am told that you have one."

"Yes, I have two," replied Pascaline.

"Can I see them?" asked the lady.

"Certainly," was the response; and the two visitors were conducted to a beautiful rose-bush bearing two half-blown roses, which shed a most delicious perfume.

"Can't I have both of them?" inquired the marchioness.

"No, madame," answere Pascaline, with a sigh; "one of them is already promised."

"Then I will take this one," said the lady. "What is the price?"

"Two louis," replied Pascaline.

"Here is the money," said the marchioness. "Send the rose to my house in the Rue St. Honore."

Pascaline bowed politely, and reconducted her wealthy customers to the door of her humble abode.

"How fortunate!" thought she. "Forty francs! With this sum I can pay my rent, and save myself from being turned out. Oh, my dear mother!" she exclaimed, "from thy happy place in heaven, thou still guardest and protectest thy daughter!"

That night was one of great grief to Pascaline. It was the eve of the anniversary of the death of her mother, a good and pious woman, who had cultivated in her daughter two chaste affections—love of God and love of flowers.

She wept as she reflected upon the last moments of that beloved mother, whom death had taken from her. It was a cold night when the weeping daughter sat by the bedside of her dying mother, who murmured, in a faint but sweet voice, "Pascaline, are our white roses still living?"

"Yes, mother," was the reply.

"Then bring them to me, that I may enjoy them once more."

The daughter brought them. They were two beautiful full-blown roses upon one branch.

The doctor said that the odor of these flowers might injure the patient.

"No, never mind," she said; "these roses, like my child, will live long after me. Pascaline, give me one of them. Bury this one with me."

A few minutes afterwards she breathed her last.

While she lay a corpse the rose was placed in her hand: but as the body was placed in her coffin the leaves of the flower fell off. She was buried, and the grave had scarcely closed when the daughter made a solemn vow, as chaste and tender as the heart that inspired it.

* * * * * *

The night was passed in prayer and filial remembrance of her mother's love. Next morning she resumed her daily task in the garden.

She recollected that she had promised to send a rose to the marchioness, and she went to pluck it; but—sad to relate—one of the flowers had withered away. A single rose only now remained.

The landlord came, and demanded his rent.

"Sir," said Pascaline, "I am unable to pay you."

"How is that? You have money," said the landlord, reminding her of the two louis which he had learned she had received from the marchioness.

"The two louis are no longer mine," replied Pascaline. "The white rose has withered and died. The money is to be returned."

"But here is another rose remaining," said her landlord—"why not send that?"

"Because it is already promised," replied Pascaline; "all the gold in the world would not purchase it!"

"Then," said the hard landlord, "you must prepare to leave at once. I can't allow tenants to occupy my cottages for nothing."

"You shall be obeyed," answered the girl, calmly.

The marchioness, upon receiving the money which she left with Pascaline the day before, hastened to the garden for the purpose of learning why the rose had not been sent.

She was informed that Mademoiselle Benoit had just gone out with a white rose in her hand. The marchioness turned and saw her walking down the street. Prompted by curiosity to see where she was going to, she resolved to follow her.

Pascaline entered a cemetery. She knelt at the grave of her mother; and, after planting the rose upon it, she exclaimed "Oh, my mother! accept this pledge of my remembrance! Receive this flower which in life you loved so much, and which my own hands have cultivated for you. Intercede for your poor child, who is this day without protection or hope!" And with her tears she bedewed the wooden cross, which was the only monument that marked the resting-place of that beloved mother.

The marchioness, moved to tears, retired unperceived.

Next day Pascaline was preparing to leave her cottage.

"Where are you going?" inquired her companions.

"I must leave you," was the reply.

"Why?" they asked.

"Because I cannot pay my rent," replied Pascaline.

"But your rent is paid for two years," said they.

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Pascaline.

"Yes," was the reply, "here is the receipt."

Pascaline was taken by surprise; but she soon comprehended the pleasant truth. That evening, a well dressed servant delivered her the following note, enclosing two hundred louis:

"MADEMOISELLE,—I know all. I know you have given to your mother the flower with which I wished to adorn my wedding-robe. I have a mother whom I adore, and can appreciate your devotion. I therefore take this opportunity of expressing my sympathy with you in such heartfelt proof of a daughter's affection. Please accept of the enclosed as a pledge of my remembrance. I hope you will not refuse me this privilege of commencing my married life by honoring filial piety. Your sincere friend,

"AMENAIDE DE REGENIAL."

TEDIOUS TALKERS.—How many tedious talkers one is forced to tolerate in the highways and byways of society! They commence a sentence and pause, make a great account of a prolonged "and," use a word and then change it for another, and consume so much precious time that, the listener becoming impatient, what they say is deemed small compensation for the time occupied.

Surrounded by bright spirits, all of whom have something to say well worth the hearing, it is insufferably annoying to be obliged to sit, outwardly calm and respectful, and listen to long-drawn sentences, the pith of whose meaning could have been expressed in a few well-chosen words.

It may be said in extenuation that all have not the power to "talk right on." But the habit of talking well may be acquired.

In the first place, one must be sure he has something to say before monopolizing the time which might otherwise be profitably and pleasantly employed; and then, in a few simple, well adapted words, bear part in the general conversation.

The wiser and more educated the society in which one finds himself, the less the necessity of robbing the dictionary for its polysyllables.

The best one has to say is best said in the simplest manner, for all love most that "talk" which seems the natural overflow of the mind. Also discard all desire to shine, and listen with respectful attention when others speak.

Scientific and Useful.

WOODEN VESSELS FOR ACIDS.—Wooden vessels are used in Russia for the transport of acids. The inside and outside surfaces are coated with a mixture of asbestos and water glass. Talc or heavy spar is suggested as a substitute for asbestos with some advantages. When this layer is dry it has a coat of solid paraffine, pitch or coal tar.

AS TO FRYING-PANS.—A frying-pan, constructed on an improved principle, has been invented. This pan consists of an outer plate of sheet iron and an inner one of burnished steel, and, between the two, is a thin layer of asbestos, the advantages claimed for it being that it cannot get overheated and burn the contents, that the fat will not splutter over the sides, and the juices of the meat are retained.

HEATED SHOES.—A shoe carrying a kind of warming-pan is said to have been invented. The heel is made hollow to receive a glowing substance, and this substance heats the water in a rubber bag, covered with asbestos, which is placed between the soles. The circulation of the water as the wearer of the shoe walks causes the entire bottom of the foot to be warmed. This sole never becomes heated above seventy degrees, and the heat lasts about eight hours. A small safety valve is inserted to prevent the bag from bursting.

A WINDLESS WATCH.—A watch which does not require winding is the latest novelty. The winding mechanism consists of an ingenious contrivance by which a small weight is raised and lowered by the jar from walking. The motion of the weight works a small ratchet arrangement, which winds the spring to its full tension, and then is automatically held until more winding is needed. A course of shaking up and down for a few minutes will answer the same purpose as a stroll afoot, while all the jolts and jars of ordinary existence are likewise made useful as a means of winding.

Farm and Garden.

PROPAGATION.—To propagate from puny plants is as fatal to success as to breed animals from scrub stock. A plant never refuses to bear fruit without a cause, and that cause is often barrenness that no system of cultivation will remove.

CALVES.—When the calf is three or four weeks old commence to feed it a little hay, for it will develop its first stomach; clover hay is the best. Then force the calves rapidly all summer by giving good pasturage, and they will be in condition to be kept through the winter without loss

STOCK.—Live stock, properly kept and intelligently managed, will come nearer keeping the average farmer in funds than any other form of rural industry. In certain sections some special kinds of work, such as truck farming, dairying or fruit culture, will prove the salvation of thousands; but the cow and the sow will continue to lift more mortgages in the corn belt than all other agencies combined.

BUT FEW WILL HEED.—A prominent scientist who has made a careful study of oleomargarine advocates the use of this compound in preference to butter. He claims that a good quality of "oleo" is safer and more healthful than the best grades of butter obtainable. He examined numerous samples of butter and found them contaminated with all sorts of germs, which were almost entirely absent from the specimens of oleomargarine.

TO TELL HORSES' CHARACTERS.—An old horse dealer says that one may partly judge of the constitution and character of a horse from its color. Bright chestnut and light bays are high spirited, but nervous and delicate. Dark chestnuts and glossy blacks are hardy and good-tempered. Rich bays have great spirit, but are tractable. Dark and iron grays are hardy and sound, while light grays are the opposite. Roans are the hardiest and best working of all, even-tempered, easiest to train, taking kindly to everything. Rusty blacks are distinguished for their obstinacy. "White stockings" give another clue to character. A horse with one white leg is said to be a bad one, with two it is a doubtful one, with three it is absolutely safe and excellent, with four may be trusted for a while.

I have used Jayne's Expectorant for twenty years, and am sure that IT HAVE SAVED MY LIFE IN ONE OR TWO INSTANCES.—G. W. LORD, Silver Lake, Maine, Oct. 16, 1895.

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On Sympathy.

A few stony impassive people may desire neither to give nor to take sympathy, but they are not numerous enough to add a tincture to mankind. Nearly all the proud who seek to appear self-contained, statuesque, commanding, and on a pinnacle above human feeling have a weak side, and, though they would resent any approach to pity, they are delighted with appreciative sympathy. They will hide their failures, or waive them aside, but they thaw and expand when one expresses interest in some enterprise on which they are bent; they are glad of a participator in their aspirations if not in their sorrows.

The uncanny strong men who can hold on their course alone, making secrets of their cares and pleasures, are mercifully rare. To most of us sympathy is an essential condition of happiness. We feel that loneliness is barren and at times terrible. We crave sympathy as a support in trouble, as a companionable heightening of pleasure, as an encouragement to brace us for hard tasks.

When men or women have a fateful secret to keep or a gnawing trouble to bear, they feel that their burden would be tolerable if only they could tell somebody about it, somebody who would hear with interest and kindness and would understand. It eases the heart to find a listener. Or, when a long and heavy task which cannot be avoided stretches years ahead and appears almost hopeless because endless, the worker thinks it would make a world of difference if somebody would sympathetically discuss the outlook and give a word of reasonable encouragement. Or, if we pass from the region of stern struggle with trouble or with weariness, do we not find the advantage of sympathy in perfecting enjoyment?

Most of us have our power of sympathizing with our fellow-mortals circumscribed within narrow limits. We are cramped by race, religion, caste, and breeding. We cannot get at the point of view of other men and put ourselves in their places. As for political parties, their misunderstanding of each other's motives, their exaggerations and perversions, are an unfailing source of amazement to those who in momentary lulls of feeling sometimes manage to look on both sides with impartiality. Then the differences of station into which we are born, followed by the slow moulding of education, tend to make a common understanding almost impossible.

In fact, we all start cramful of prejudices that are part of our very being, and only the most rigorous watchfulness—and perhaps not even that—will help us to be fair, much less to be sympathetic, towards those who are separated from us by birth, training, experience, and thought.

Nay, not only do we find it difficult to sympathize with the stranger who is afar off from us in feeling, but we often are unable to approach in a spirit of helpful confidence those who are nearest to us, because they evade us. It is one of the commonest of experiences to find people who are in trouble guarding themselves jealously from the observation of their acquaintances and friends. It would be an immense relief to talk over their perplexities with some one, but they are afraid of anything approaching "gush;" they dread to strike a discordant note; they are ashamed to tell to those who know them all that they think or fear.

But, in spite of this cowering away from observation and all the difficulties of understanding each other notwithstanding the sundering influences of prejudice, the cry for sympathy is never quieted. It is very terrible and yet beautiful, this unceasing passionate wail for some one to understand and to pour comfort into lives that are being made sterile by sorrow, weariness, disappointment, or perplexity. It sometimes seems to us that there is no room in the world for any expenditure of human feeling except upon the pressing wants of men and women now alive—not on their material wants alone, but on their unstaunched yearning for a kindly interchange of thought and love with their fellows.

We turn our thoughts upon the past and live over again the tragedies of history and of literature. Is it an exaggeration to say that three-fourths of the heart-stirrings that come to the reading man or woman come through mental contact with the heroic actions of dead men—saints, soldiers, scholars, travelers, seers—or with the shadowy beings that suffer in the pages of fiction? Yet the same stories are being enacted around us by the score to-day. Love unrequited, yet faithful; love faithful through long years, and yet betrayed at last; jealousy, suspicion, inconstancy; scoundrelism stalking down its victims; credulous innocence waiting to be enmeshed; duty holding steadily along its narrow round, and selfishness grabbing the gains from duty's labors and giving no thanks—these and a hundred other complications of feeling are going on under our eyes every day, if we could but see, and the living actors are asking anxiously to be understood and appreciated at least, if not helped. Alas, no scrap of sympathy can be spared from the world's present care to be lavished on historic sentimentalities!

Our lack of sympathy with men of all classes in their difficulties, their narrowness and prejudice, their sad futilities, their brief triumphs, is due sometimes to a want of natural kindness, to absorption in selfish thoughts, but more frequently to want of knowledge. There are kind and well-meaning people who try to make themselves agreeable, and yet whose every word is felt to be wrong and jarring, because they never quite get into touch with those to whom they are talking. Perhaps the most important factor is the theory of the relation of man to man which we hold—whether we act as believers in the great gospel of human brotherhood. That is a passport to all hearts that are not wholly degraded. And a sense of humor is, too, more helpful than many more highly-rated gifts in helping us to understand, bear with, and allow for men who differ widely and oddly from most of us.

May there be such a thing as too acute sympathy with the troubles of others? It is a rare thing—but not impossible—to find those whose hearts are lacerated by borrowed sorrows and who are bent by the burden of other men's woes. Not unfrequently a too-keen sense of human suffering will mask itself under the form of apparent cynicism. A sensitive weak man dares not to "earn the shame of an enthusiast," as Goldsmith expressed it; and so he smothers his emotion by a timely jest.

Burke's definition of the scope of sympathy was the true one—"It is by this passion that we enter into the concerns of others, that we are moved as they are moved, and are never suffered to be indifferent spectators of almost anything which man can do or suffer." For sympathy must be considered a sort of substitution by which we are put into the place of another man, and affected in many respects as he is affected. It leaps direct from mind to mind without any intervening medium; it is a vague presence, a consciousness, and not a measurable material fact; it lives in the same rare pure air as love, and fulfils as sacred a function.

WANTED.—By the Editors of THE POST, a complete file of the issue for 1888. In exchange we will send one year's subscription, free. Only a single set is desired, and the first one offered will be accepted.

THE severest test of manhood is never found in good times, but only in hard times. It is not the man who has success when others are doing well, but it is the man who keeps up his courage and struggles on wh n everybody else is wavering or going down who is the real hero. It is an easy matter to make good time when both wind and tide are in one's favor, or when one is moving with the current; but it requires character and skill and daring to make speed in spite of opposing forces or to work successfully against the current.

A MAN may, from education, training, and habit, or even from motives of policy, or other reasons, usually speak the truth, and be esteemed accordingly. Yet he may not by any means be imbued with the spirit of truth which animates his neighbor, who loves and reveres it, not merely for its results, but for its own sake, whose impulses spring towards it, and whose whole life manifests it, not only in word, but in deed and in thought. Truth does not get exalted by flinging it at people; it is exalted whenever it is really expressed in a man's life and shines out through him.

NEVER condemn your neighbor unheard, however many the accusations preferred against him. Every story may be told in two ways, and justice requires that you should hear the defence as well as the accusation. Remember, moreover, that the malignity of enemies may place you in a similar position.

WHEN a man begins to do wrong, he cannot answer for himself how far he may be carried on. He does not see beforehand, he cannot know where he will find himself after the sin is committed. One false step leads to another; one evil connection requires another.

To work worthily, man must aspire worthily. His theory of human attainment must be lofty. It must ever be lifting him above the low plain of custom and convention, in which the senses confine him, into the high mount of vision, and of renovating ideas.

PLEASURE is necessarily reciprocal; no one feels it who does not at the same time give it. To be pleased one must please. What pleases you in others will in general please them in you.

Correspondence.

MUDDLED.—The Duchess of York is the daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Teck, the latter being first cousin to the Queen. That is all the relationship.

ADELIA.—The story of Sir Walter Raleigh writing "Fain would I climb but that I fear to fall," is an accredited one, or so good an historian as Sir Walter Scott would not have used it. But Niebuhr has taught us generally to discredit old stories; indeed, one gentleman goes so far as to doubt any story that is particularly well accredited, for inventors generally "lie with a circumstance."

DICK.—It is not likely that you could recover anything of the shipping merchants to whom you refer, on account of what you consider their false representations, and your consequent suffering and loss of health. They could keep the case in court for years, and when it should come to trial the chances would be that you could not prove enough to make them liable for either your ill-treatment or the damage to your health.

CLARENCE.—A nuncupative will is a verbal one, and such disposition of property must be made in the presence of at least as many witnesses as would be required for a written will. The testator must request the persons present to bear witness that the words spoken constitute his last will. But a verbal will, even where allowed to persons taken suddenly ill, or away from home, cannot dispose of real estate. The words of the testator should be put in writing as soon as practicable. As a rule, the will cannot be proved after six months from death if not in writing within ten days.

M. J.—No set form of invitation is well possible, the phraseology changing with the occasion, degree of intimacy or relationship between the parties and other circumstances. Above all the models usually given in "letter-writers" should be avoided. In the cases you mention the best authorities on the subject commend the following between ordinary social acquaintances: "Mr. Smith would be pleased to have Miss Jones Company to the (party, ball or other entertainment) at (such and such a place) on (mentioning the time)." Should the lady accept, the proper answer would run: "Miss Jones accepts with pleasure Mr. Smith's kind invitation for (mentioning the evening)." If impossible for her to accept the declination takes the shape of: "Miss Jones regrets that a previous engagement (or whatever may be the preventing cause) will prevent her accepting Mr. Smith's kind invitation." All invitations should be dated at the top on the right, and the writer's address legibly, written below on the left, the body of the invitation occupying the centre of the sheet.

PASSION.—You are married, and must endeavor to be a good wife. The affections are dual. The familiar phrase, "they took a fanc. to each other," is strictly correct. The outward appearance of two young people may be widely different, but each will see something beyond it which will attract them to each other immediately. Their inner lives even at first sight mutually correspond. The one sees in the other traits similar to its own, and the outer life forthwith seizes hold of the conviction, and gives it form and substance. This is the whole secret of love at first sight, also the origin of friendship, the bond between races—the intelligence that pervades the universe. Its manifestations cling to every individual as leaves do upon the trees, and its study, we are convinced, would afford a clue to the operation of all such phenomena as the divination of the ancients, or the mesmerism of modern times. The inner life is the soul of the universe—the element that spiritualises all things; and whatever name we may give it, or however its separate identity may puzzle our understandings, we are always sensible that it is about and within us. It is the "still small voice" whose faintest echo is heard above the howling of the tempest, the roar of battle, or the deep-tnroated whirl of every-day life.

CARONUS.—There are many theories as to the origin of the population of America. In the ruined cities of Central America, cities of vast antiquity, there are those who see an Egyptian or a Jewish origin. The Pre-Columbian discovery of America is by some considered an established fact. Oderic Vitalis and Adam of Bremen (who both wrote in the eleventh century) mention the discovery of unknown countries to the south and west of Greenland and Iceland by Scandinavians. But this is not the point; hundreds, probably thousands of years before parts of Europe had emerged from barbarism, America boasted of huge cities, pyramids, vast fortifications, and an amount of art which is astonishing. It is before the relations given us by the Icelandic sagas that we must search; it is amongst the ruins of Palenque, Uxinal, Copan and Chichen, that we shall find traces of the oldest race. The figures there sculptured closely resemble Layard's Nineveh relics. The very painting and colors used are like them. But who these men were we know not. They were probably Easterns who had sailed from island to island in the archipelagos of the Pacific; thus South America was populated, whilst North America may have received its inhabitants from Greenland. That amidst great fertility and immense heat the race had prospered and expanded, there is no doubt. The South became effete and fell an easy conquest to the greedy Spaniards; the ignorance of the Northern race, the Senecas, Iroquois and other tribes, alone prevented them from coping with the European invaders, and driving them back.

GIRLHOOD.

BY S. G.

A gracious time!
When budding thought and every virtue should
Give promise of a fair and fruitful prime
In riper womanhood.

A royal dower!
Of gend'ring love and sweet home influence
Whose best and greatest treasure is the flower
Of spotless innocence.

A fountain bright!
Of laughing stream, unsullied at the source,
And meant to scatter comfort and delight
Throughout its later course.

A God-sent gift!
O take it not unheeded—rather choose
Each day, dear maid, thy simple prayer to lift,
Lest thou the boon misuse.

Dead and Forgotten.

BY A. N.

IT was a cold dark wintry night. Two women stood together about a hundred yards from a deserted-looking house, which lay far back from the road near the small village of Wrabton. They remained facing each other silently for some minutes; then the elder woman spoke.

"You have forgotten nothing?"

"No."

"What is your name?"

"Wilkins."

"And you solemnly swear never to quit this village?"

"I promise to stay here until I die or am fetched away."

"Very well. Here is some money. When that is spent expect nothing more. By that time I dare say you will have been able to get some rough work to keep your worthless body and soul together. Any way, I have done with you."

"I understand. Are you going now?"

"Not until I've seen if they will shelter you in yonder house. I'll not have you following me, spying out where I'm going." As she spoke the woman pointed to the lonely house.

Without a word of parting, the other turned and went down the narrow path leading to the house-door. The elder woman waited until she disappeared; then she turned and walked away.

It was past eleven o'clock when Wilkins knocked with her knuckles upon the floor.

"Come in!"

Wilkins entered timidly and stood just inside the door. An old woman sitting by the fire turned and looked at her.

"Can't you shut the door," she asked querulously, "and say what you want?"

Wilkins closed the door and stepped forward into the light cast by one dismal tallow candle for about a yard round the spot where the old woman sat.

"Can I stay here for the night?" she asked nervously. She glanced round the room as she spoke, and saw that it was comfortably furnished and clean.

"That depends on whether you are able to pay for your bed."

"Oh, I can pay!"

"Come and sit down by the fire, then, and let's have a look at yer."

Wilkins did as she was told, and the old woman looked at her. She was a tall fair girl, with almost golden hair, deep Irish blue eyes fringed with black lashes, and dark-brown eyebrows. Her features were not particularly good, except her mouth, which was small and sweet, albeit a trifle weak.

The old woman carefully scrutinized her, and then gave a grunt; but it was not an unkindly grunt—rather one of satisfaction. Wilkins was too tired to form any opinion about her hostess. She had but one desire, and it was that she might be alone to think her own thoughts.

"Can I go to my room?" she asked gently. "I'm very tired."

"Yes. Thank goodness I'm not like some folks; my spare room is always ready, the sheets aired and everything!"

Rising, the old woman took the candle in her hand and conducted the girl to a small bed-room, so far superior with regard to furniture to the room she had left that she was quite surprised at its appearance. She made no remark however, but, as soon as the woman had gone, threw herself wearily into a chair and thought dismally of all that had happened to her since the morning. At eleven o'clock that morning she had been a light-hearted girl, with a fairly bright future before her; now she was a nameless outcast, bound by the most solemn promises not to reveal her identity to any living soul, cast, hopeless and homeless, for the rest of her days among strangers, and told by her nearest connection that the best thing to be hoped for was that she might die and be forgotten.

When she awoke the next morning and looked out of her window, she found the ground hidden by a white quilt of snow. Opening the lattice, despite the bitter cold, she put out her head as far as she could; but nothing was to be seen but snow—neither house nor barn nor tree nor village church-spire. Even the road she had traveled the night before and the gate to the narrow pathway leading up to the house were obliterated and covered up by a vast fall of snow.

As she turned with a sigh from the window, she heard the sound of bony knuckles rapping at her door. Opening it, she beheld the woman of the house.

"Are yer coming down?" she asked. "Breakfast is ready. Ye'll not go far afield ter-day, I'll warrant ye!"

Wilkins followed the woman down the steep narrow wooden stairs into the kitchen. A bright fire was blazing in the grate. A young man was leaving the room as she entered. Apparently he had just finished his breakfast.

"I'll be a-seeing if I can't get some er this heer plaguy snow away, mother."

"Do'ee; but don't'ee be a-staying too long out theer in the cold."

"Don't put yourself about. I'm old enough to take care o' myself, I'm thinking;" and, without taking the least notice of Wilkins, the man slouched out of the room.

"What'll yer be a-having for yer breakfast?" asked his mother of Wilkins. "There's porridge and pork and eggs and tea."

"I'll have some tea and an egg, please," said the girl.

"Help yerself. I'm a-going to feed the chickens;" and the woman left the room.

As soon as she had finished breakfast, Wilkins went up-stairs and made the bed she had slept in. Opening the black bag in which she had deposited the money that her companion had left her, she saw that it was safe; then she re-locked the bag, and fastened the key to a silken chain which she wore around her neck.

Besides this money, the bag contained a change of linen; and this, with a pair of slippers and the clothes she had on, was all that Wilkins possessed in the world. Everything she wore was new and unmarked, and of a course durable description—the kind of clothes that a clean self-respecting housemaid would provide herself with before going to a new place.

When she went down-stairs, she found the mistress of the house sitting by the fire knitting and watching a saucepan simmering on the hob.

"Come and sit down," she said kindly. "I'm afraid ye're bound to stay here for a bit."

"I never want to go away," returned the girl dully.

"Never want to go away! I never heard tell of such a thing! What'll yer friends be a-thinking of, I wonder?"

"I have no friends."

"No friends! What d'ye mean?"

"Just what I say. Oh, do let me stay here—won't you?"

"What's yer name?"

"Wilkins."

"Wilkins? 'Tain't a pretty name. What's yer other?"

"Wilkins—only Wilkins."

"Oh, that's nonsense! But it ain't no business of mine. What d'ye mean by wanting to stay here? Yer can't expect me to keep yer."

"No—oh, no! I'll pay you."

"How much'll yer pay?"

"I don't know. Tell me what you want."

"Is it board and lodging?"

"Yes."

"Well, if yer lives like we do, yer can have board and lodgin' and the room yer slept in last night for ten shillings a week—leastways it my son John be agr'able."

"Yes, I'll pay that—I can pay that. And, by-and-by, do you think I could find something I could do?"

"To earn yer livin', d'ye mean?"

"Yes."

"What can yer do?"

"I can teach music a little, and I can sing, and ——"

"There ain't no call for them there things in this yere place. D'ye know where yer are?"

"No."

"Bless me! How did yer get here?"

"I don't know."

"Did yer come in the train?"

"Part of the way."

"Yer ain't a-goin' to tell me nothing about yerself, I s'pose?" said the woman irritably.

The girl made no reply.

"What'll yer do if I turns yer out?"

"Go somewhere else."

"But yer can't. Yer five miles from anywhere. If yer wandered off the track—and it's that covered with snow yer couldn't keep it—yer'd be lost on the moor and dead afore mornin'."

"So much the better," said the girl in a bitter tone.

At that moment the woman's son came in, carrying in his arms a large collie. The animal was half frozen, and his master, as he came up to the fire with him, cried out:—

"Make room for Sandy—can't yer? I found him halt dead in the snow just now by the yard gate. Ne'er mind, Sandy boy; we'll soon have yer all right!"

Without a word Wilkins moved her chair away to the window, while the old woman warmed some milk to pour down the dog's throat. In a little while the animal revived sufficiently to curl itself up comfortably on the rug in front of the fire and fell asleep.

"I've never knowed yer make all that fuss over me," said the old woman jealously. "Many and many's the time I've come home a'most frozen on a Saturday from my marketing, and yer haven't done nothing!"

The man looked at his mother; he was about to make a hasty retort, but altered his mind. Then, after a minute, he said—

"What yer say's true, mother. I'm free to confess that in a kind er way a man is fonder o' his dog than his womankind—you see the beast never pitches inter him and shows him the rough side of his tongue—but, if yer come ter real right-down love, I guess it's another kind o' broth;" and he bent his head down and gave her a sounding kiss.

"Don't yer be a fool, John! Don't yer see that there's a young woman in the room?" This was said in a mollified tone, and with a broad grin on her face.

John turned and looked at Wilkins. She was standing in the full light of the window. At first he glanced at her carelessly, then, with an almost imperceptible start, he looked more carefully.

"Won't yer come to the fire, miss?" he asked, in a respectful tone.

"No, thank you," the girl replied softly, promptly leaving the room to give his mother a chance to talk over her proposal to lodge and board with them.

"Well, I'm danged!" said he, standing in the middle of the room and scratching his head.

"What be the matter with yer? Ain't yer never seen a young woman afore?"

"'Tain't that! 'Tain't that! But whire hev she come from?"

"That's more'n that I can tell; and she wants to live here, and 'll pay ten shillings a week if yer'll let her."

"Oh, I'm agr'able—I'm agr'able!" muttered John, still in a maze.

"I told her she must pig in along o' us if she stayed here."

John recovered himself at this.

"No, she won't," said he. "If she stays here—and yer'd better let her—ye'll hev to serve her meals separit. I ain't a-going ter feed along er no young women! And, 'nother thing, yer must make a fire in that there bed-room o' hers. I ain't a-going ter give up my pipe for none o' yer young women neither!"

"Lor, John, she knows herself better than ter be expectin' it of yer! It'll make me er heap er trouble if I hev ter get her meals separit, and er fire too."

"Well, yer'll hev to. Yer can keep the ten shillings for yourself; but that's what yer'll hev ter do. And now I'm going ter smoke a pipe on this here go, for it's the rummiest one I ever did see!"

He lit his pipe and sat down to think. His wits were slow in working, but he was no fool. And what he had to think about would have puzzled a wise man. Briefly, he had seen Wilkins before. It was but three days previously, in Scotland, just over the border; she was with a young man—his own master, in fact—whom she called her husband, or, rather, he called her his wife. The two had driven up to the hotel where he was waiting for his master at about three o'clock in the morning.

His master had asked for a room for his wife, had left her there for the rest of the night, and had then taken John with him to the railway-station, some ten miles off, to get a telegram he was expecting from his father, who was abroad, dangerously ill. It was a bitterly cold drive, and, when they got to the station, they had to wait till six o'clock for the office to open. While they were waiting his master said to him—

"That young lady we left at the hotel yonder is my wife, John."

"So I heard yer say, sir. Begging your pardon, I didn't know yer was married."

"I dare say not. But marriage is easy in Scotland. I want you to remember that that young lady's name is 'Joan Considine'—or, rather, it was yesterday—and that I told you that she is my wife. We are going to keep it quiet for a bit, as I'm not twenty-one; but I want you not to forget that she's my wife."

There was a little conscious pride in which the young man said "my wife" which was somewhat touching, John however only took a common-sense view of the matter.

"It ain't much use my knowing the young lady's name if I don't see what she's like, sir, I'm thinking."

"You're right, John. I must manage it somehow; but she's shy, and doesn't want to see any one more than she can help."

By this time the office was open, his master got the telegram, and in a few minutes they were driving back to the hotel. For some time his master did not speak. When he did, he said impressively—

"Look here, John! I agree with you in thinking that you had better see my wife, in case of accident; and I think it can be managed in this way.

"While we are at breakfast you knock at the door and bring in this telegram. You can wait while I see to read it, and, when I say 'No answer,' you can leave the room. Directly we have had breakfast I shall take her back to the place where she lives, and then go to London and start from Charing Cross by the mail, cross over to Calais, and get to my father to-morrow evening."

"Shall I go with yer, sir?"

"No; you'd better go home for a while. I'll write and let you know when I want you."

"And ter take your luggage to Charing Cross, sir, while yer take the young lady home?"

"Exactly. Meet me with it at the station to-night."

"Yes, sir."

It was this that John was thinking as he smoked his pipe. If Wilkins was not Miss Jean Considine, then that young lady had her "double!" But how had she managed to get to Wrabton on the same night, and at almost the same time as John himself? Further, why had she come to Wrabton at all?

Puzzle as he would, it was a mystery to him. And, as, having smoked his pipe, he knocked the ashes out upon the hearth and put it away carefully in his pocket, he was certain of but one thing, and that was that the young woman must be kept where she was until he could let his master know of her whereabouts. This would take time first, because his master had not told him where to write to, and, secondly, because, while the snow lasted, it would be impossible for him to receive or send a letter.

"But it cuts both ways," he thought philosophically; "for neither can she get away till the weather breaks."

The young woman did not try, but seemed quite contented to stay where she was. She was quiet, grateful, yet very miserable, and was thankful for the fire in her room, which she insisted upon lighting herself, although the clumsy manner in which she did it proved that she was unused to the work.

She ate but little, but did not complain of her food. Once, when Mrs. Peck, John's mother, asked her if there was anything she fancied in particular, she replied—

"No. I like bread-and-butter and eggs very much—bread-and-milk too. I don't eat because I'm not hungry."

Day after day the snow fell. Sometimes it would thaw a little in the day-time; but it seemed always to snow at night. At last John could stand the condition of affairs no longer. As a rule, he went out into the yard and cleared away the snow and chopped the wood while Wilkins was having her breakfast; but one morning he lounged restless about the room, one moment in front of the fire, another looking out of the window.

"It's been going on like this for more'n three weeks now," he burst out at last, "and I'm a-going to make a push for the postoffice, just to see if a letter I'm expecting ain't a-waiting there for me! Is there anything yer want from the village, mother? Can I see for a letter for you, miss?"

"For me?" said Wilkins drearily. "There'll be no letter for me, thank you."

"Yer ain't going ter be sich a fule, John Peck, as to try ter push through this here snow just for a letter, be ye—yer not havin' no sweet heart neither—leastways not as ever I heerd tell on?" remonstrated his mother wrathfully.

"I be just that fule!" said John good-humoredly. "And I be a-going now and Sandy's a-going with me. Aren't you, old boy?"

He gave a cheerful whistle to the dog, and putting on a thick old coat, set out, banging the door behind him.

But he was not to be let off so easily. In a minute his mother was after him with a big market-basket and a list of things he was to bring her from the village shop.

"There," she exclaimed on her return—"yer may as well be a fule for some use, I'm thinking!" Then, turning to Wilkins—"If yer don't mind sitting down here to-day, I'll take the chance o' John's bein' out ter give yer room a good clean. Yer see, when he's at home, he doesn't like yer in the way. Men likes ter have the place ter theerselves."

Wilkins offered no objection, nor did she say anything when Mrs. Peck sat down to dinner with her. At tea the same thing occurred, and before they had finished John returned. He was heavily laden and looked cheerful.

"It isn't as bad out as yer'd think," said he. "It's cold, but there's no wind."

"Yer've got all I want, I hopes?" inquired his mother.

"Think so. I've got my letter too. It's been a-waitin' at that there post office for me more'n a week, though."

"Who be it from?"

"From the young maister."

"From Maister Tom?"

"Y-e-s. He says as how the old maister—Maister Arbuthnot—be powerful bad." As John mentioned his master's name he took a sidelong glance at Wilkins, and thought she turned a shade paler if possible.

"Then yer don't expect him back ter England in a hurry?"

"Yes, I do. I expects him back next week. He says as how the old man doesn't want him ter stay out there for long; so I expects he'll be down here for the hunting next week. I be a-going to write to him by-and-by, so as ter post the letter to-morrow. I'll take a letter ter the post for yer too, miss, if yer has one ready."

"Thank you. I have no letters to send." And, as she had finished her tea, Wilkins moved from the table to a corner near the fire. She did not go upstairs, for there was no fire in her room, and she knew the old woman would be vexed if she lighted it so late in the day.

When the girl moved from the table, John sat down to his tea; his mother remained at the table for a little gossip.

"Well, John, now tell us who yer saw."

"Not many. It ain't the weather for people to be a-takin' their walks abroad. There was that Miss Davenport, though."

"The young lady as Mr. Tom be a-going to marry?" asked Mrs. Peck.

John had drawn his chair to the table in such a position as to command the corner where Wilkins sat and watched her as he spoke.

"That's all gammon! Mr. Tom ain't a-going to marry any such as she; and it's like her cheek a-gettin' herself invited down here just 'cos she knows he's a-comin'!—this with great indignation.

"His mother wants him ter marry her."

"I guess she don't; and I guess she don't know he's a-comin' down here neither."

"Lor, John, yer thinks yer knows a lot!"

"So I does. A lot more'n that old cat, I know."

"Well, I'm sure I don't care who the young maister marries, so long as she makes him a good wife! I don't hold with interferin' with young people—I don't! Let 'em marry as 'em likes. Now did yer see anybody else—any one more of a neighbor like?"

"Y-e-s. I see old Mrs. Sparrow, she asked me ter come over to tea next Sunday, and I sed as I would."

Mrs. Peck gave a sniff. She did not look pleased.

"Like her! She's got that there Sally o' hers at home again—that gell never do keep a place more'n a month or two—an' she thinks yer goin' ter tek up with her again. But yer knows yerself better, I should hope, John!"

"Look'ee here, mother—I bain't a-going ter say I shall and I bain't a-going ter say I sha'n't!" said John resolutely. "You just tek that there exslent advice yer was a-dishin' up for the old missus just now, and let us young people manage our own affairs!"

The old woman's eyes flashed angrily, and she would have replied sharply had not Wilkins created a diversion by leaving the room.

It was late that night before John finished the long letter he had decided to write to his master. He was genuinely fond of him. A few years older, John had taught him to fish, bird's-nest, and ride his pony in his home in Warwickshire, near beautiful leafy Leamington.

John's father had been gamekeeper, and, as soon as he left school, John went into the stables at the Abbey, and became in time his young master's special groom, often accompanying him when he left home.

It was not until her husband's death that Mrs. Peck came to Wrabton, where she had a good-sized cottage which had been left her by her uncle.

The old woman made a fair living by rearing poultry and pigs, and selling them and her garden produce in the neighboring market-town. She was well-to-do for her station in life, and much respected by her neighbors. John was her only child and the darling of her heart.

He would inherit what she had to leave, so she was very anxious that he should take to himself a steady suitable wife—"not one of yer giddy fly-away gells," as she expressed it.

His letter finished, John was fastening the envelope, when he heard a light step on the stairs. He immediately slipped off his shoes, and blowing out the light, stepped noiselessly into the little washhouse at the back of the kitchen. Here he waited with one of his eyes close to the crack in the door.

In a minute Wilkins opened the door at the foot of the stairs. He saw by the light of the candle she carried that she was dressed to go out. She went to the table and placed something—John could not see what—upon it. Then she caught sight of the letter he had left there, and of its address. This seemed too much for her.

Kneeling down by the table, she buried her hands in her face, and although she uttered no sound, her heaving shoulders showed that she was sobbing bitterly. After a while she rose, wiped her eyes, picked up her black bag, and going over to the outer door, put her hand upon the bolt. Then John thought it was time for him to interfere.

"I beg your pardon, miss," said he, coming forward and speaking very gently; "but it's too late, and not the kind of weather for you ter be out."

The girl looked at him with dignified astonishment at his presumption in interfering.

"I've left a week's money on the table for your mother," said she coldly, pointing to where a half-sovereign lay, "and now I'm going away."

"No, miss," returned John firmly, speaking in his best manner—"I can't let you go; or, if you will, I must follow you. How dare I look my master in the face if you come to harm?"

"Your master! What has your master to do with me?" said the girl haughtily. "For whom do you take me?"

"For Miss Joan Considine as was—for Mrs. Thomas Arbuth——"

"Hush, hush!" cried the girl wildly. "You don't know what you're talking about!"

"Begging your pardon, I do, miss. But I'll hold my tongue if you'll promise not to go away."

"And if I refuse?"

"Then I follow wherever you may please to go;" and, stopping, John slipped on his shoes and picked up his letter and put it into his pocket.

"If I stay, you will not send that letter?"

John thought for a moment; then he turned and threw the letter upon the dying fire. It blazed up and was consumed in a moment.

"And you will not tell your mother my secret?"

"As far as mother is concerned, your secret is as my letter."

"And—and you'll give me notice if he—you know whom I mean—finds out where I am?"

"If it's through me, miss, I promise," he said. "But not until he's at the gate," he added to himself.

"And——" But at that moment Mrs. Peck's voice was heard at the top of the stairs.

"John," she called suspiciously, "who's that yer a-talking to?"

John promptly blew out Wilkins' candle and called up the stairs:

"I've been a-readin' my letter out loud, to see how it goes like. It's a fearsome thing writin' to gentle'm; they be so niminy-piminy-like—they don't understand a letter unless it runs like a fresh-greased cart-wheel!"

"Humph! Just see as yer bolt the door; and don't go sitting up any longer."

"All right. You go to bed, and I'll come and tuck the old rug over you. It'll be cold enough just before the morning breaks."

The old woman went back to her room.

"Now miss," whispered John, "if you'll follow me upstairs, I'll go into mother's room and talk to her, so she won't hear any noise you make."

So saying, John stamped upstairs and into his mother's room, where he talked to her in a loud tone until he thought Wilkins had had sufficient time to get back to her bed.

Despite John's prediction, the next morning came a thaw—not rapid—that, with the weight of snow there was upon the land would have been disastrous—but a gradual one, for which the folk could make preparation.

John spent the best part of the day in making trenches for the water to run away and not swamp the pig styes and hen houses.

So busy was he that it was not until night that he could spare a moment for the consideration of his young master's affairs; for John was not one of those who could do more than one thing at a time; but at night, with Wilkins in her own room, he began to cast about in his mind how, without breaking his word in the matter of writing to him, he should let the young man know the whereabouts of his wife.

"Mother," he said suddenly, as Mrs. Peck sat busy with her needle opposite to him, "do'ee remember the young maister's birthday? When it comes, I mean?"

Mrs. Peck dropped her work and took off her spectacles.

"Let's see!" said she, considering. "I remember as how it was on some o' these here saints' days, 'cos they was a-going to call him 'Valentine.' Be there a saint of that there name, think yer?"

"Of course there be," replied John, a broad grin on his face. "It's next Saturday, the fourteenth of February."

"I should like ter know how yer so certain o' the date. Yer bean't a-going to spend yer money a-sendin' no valentines to that there Sally Sparrow, I hopes?"

"I hadn't thought er doin' so till yer mentioned it; but——"

"O' course not! Yer knows yerself better, I'm sure," said the old lady in a tone of conviction.

"Maybe," returned John slily. "Still, I ain't a-going to forget what yer said about Madam interferin' with——"

"Don't yer be a fule, John. What for d'ye want to know about Maister Tom's birthday?"

"Well, I was a-thinking as perhaps yer might write to him, and remind him how yer used to nurse him when he was a babby, a-sayin' as how, if he would come in and see yer when he's in these parts, it'd make yer no end proud and happy."

"Now ra-ally, John, I never thought of it; but I should dearly like ter see him agen! Sure I'll write, if yer knows where to send the letter."

"Oh, I knows right enough. Yer just write a letter, and I'll send it on and pay the postage."

"I'll do it at once. It needn't be very long, need it?"

"No—the shorter the better. It won't take him so long ter read then."

In about an hour the old woman had covered, with much aid from her son in spelling, only about a page of note-paper; but as it stated exactly what he wanted, her son was content. When he had sealed and directed it, John the wily said:

"I don't think if I was yer, I'd mention this letter to Miss Wilkins. It's the nature o' young women ter be curious, and you don't want her round when the young maister comes."

"Course not! I knows the ways o' young gells. She'd be sure ter be a-comin' down here accidentally a-purpose like. You trust me, John; I wasn't born yesterday! I ain't sure as it wouldn't be best ter get her out o' the way altogether when I knows he's a-comin'. She wants to buy some things, she was a-sayin'. I might get old Wast the carrier to drive her ter Tawton that day."

"I shouldn't go for ter do that, mother; I should go with her. There's a many 'ud be glad ter pick ten shillings a week up easy besides yerself. At the same time I expect the young maister'll come in unexpected like when he's out hunting."

"Maybe yer right, John. Any way, I don't say nothin' about him ter her."

And, as this was what John wanted, he said no more on the subject.

Another dreary fortnight drifted away. The frost and snow had gone, and had been succeeded by mild cloudy weather. "Fine huntin' weather!" John said. Although it was not pleasant walking, one could get out, and Wilkins spent a great part of the day in long weary tramps, coming home, as Mrs. Peck complained, with her boots "plastered an inch thick with mud."

"Yer needn't trouble yerself about the mud. You jist give me them boots o' her'n, and I'll settle 'em," said John.

"I don't see as how yer be called on ter do it. Them as makes their boots dirty should clean 'em, ses I!"

"I wonder how much Miss Wilkins costs yer for grub, mother? I 'spects Mrs. Sparrow 'ud clean her boots and welcome for ten shillings a week."

"Yer needn't go a-throwing Mrs. Sparrow up in my face, John, at every turn," said his mother tartly; "it ain't becoming of yer!"

"No, 'tain't; yer quite right," he allowed, giving her a kiss. "But it seems ter me the only comfort the poor soul takes in her walks abroad."

"Comfort, indeed! They'll bring her ter her grave it they go on much longer. She's just wearin away ter er shadder."

"We'll hope they won't go on much longer. Dang it, there's the young maister a-fastenin' his horse ter the gate!"—and John hastened out of the door as he spoke.

"Good-morning, John!" cried out a handsome young fellow in "pink." "If your mother's in, come and hold my horse for a moment, will you? The brute's fresh and won't stand."

"Ay, sir!"—and John took the bridle from his master's hand.

"I think you'd better mount and give him a ten-minutes' run. Don't be longer, as I don t want to take up too much of Mrs. Peck's time."

Mr. Tom Arbuthnot walked into the house, and John—than which nothing could have suited him better—got upon the horse.

"Now," said he to himself, glancing back at his master as he strode up the path to where Mrs. Peck was standing, "it may be ten minutes or it may be a hundred ten minutes, but yer don't get away from here until you've seen your wife!" And then he galloped off in search of Wilkins.

Mr. Tom Arbuthnot was a tall, handsome, dark young man, who looked older than twenty-one. He had a thoroughly good sensible face. Mrs. Peck simply beamed over him as she got him into a seat close to the fire and prepared for a long chat.

"But you're not lookin' well, sir," said she presently. "Something's troublin' yer, for sure. Maybe the maister isn't so well?"

"My father? Oh, he's better, and Mrs. Arbuthnot is with him! I've come into the property now, you know—all except what my mother left him," he said absently.

"Then yer'll be thinkin' of takin' a wife, I expect? I wonder it yer have any lady specially in yer head?" questioned the old woman slily.

The young man looked at her suspiciously. He wondered if John had been talking. What did it matter if he had? Suddenly the desire to have a sympathetic woman, humble though she was, to talk to and confide in came to him.

"Do you remember a fair-haired little girl, Mrs. Arbuthnot's stepdaughter, who used to run about the grounds in a neglected sort of way at home?"

"Yes, sir—that I do. Be she the young lady?"

"Yes. But I can't find her. About six weeks ago we met at a ball up in the North. I dare say John has told you all about it?"

"John knows hisself better, I should hope, than to talk about his maister's affairs!' said the old woman with dignity. At the same time she decided that she "owed" John "one" for his reticence.

"Well, we met at this ball; and now I can't find her anywhere. I've been to the lady with whom she was living. She declares she never saw her after she left her by mistake at the ball. But that I know is a falsehood."

"But she must be somewhere. Doesn't Mrs. Arbuthnot, her step-mother know where she be?"

"She swears she doesn't. I'll wait another week, and then I'll set detectives to work. My only fear is that she i dead."

What did she grow up like? I never ... her after she was ten. Then she was a ... little pretty 'un; but then there's ... children like that."

... altogether altered from what ... when you saw her last. She's—

... ly!" the young man burst out.

... added reflectively, "She has one ... ishing mark, though—I noticed ... I was dancing with her."

... that be, sir?"

... deep little triangular scar under her ... Madame threw a pair of scissors ... in one of her tempers."

... that was after I left."

... yes! Joan was nearly fifteen then. ... into such a rage about it that ... am became suspicious, and sent her ... there and then. But it was too late, ... I'd made up my mind she should be ...

... you, sir. You always was the ... determinedest young gentleman as ... did see." Then, after a pause—"Now where did I see a body with a scar ... chin? Not long a-gone, neither." ... suddenly—"Why, it was last Mon... as ever was, and it was that there ... as 'twas!"

"What are you talking about, you ... old soul?" said Tom Arbuthnot, ... smiling.

"Was it a three-cornered scar, sir?"

"Yes; but you never saw it."

"Not Miss Joan's, I didn't; but there's ... woman a-staying here as has a ... -cornered scar on her chin."

"I dare say"—indifferently.

"And Wilkins came here unexpected ... on the 22nd of January. It was a ... day."

"Who's Wilkins?"

"That's more'n I can tell, sir. But I ... a-sittin' up a-waitin' for John, which ... of me know as he was a-comin' that ... night, when all of a sudden the door ... opened and there stood a young woman, ... as pretty as paint, and ask me if I'd ... take her in; and here she's been ever ... since."

"But who is she?" said Tom, interested in spite of himself.

"I know no more'n Adam, sir. She says her name is Wilkins, and that's all. Still, if it weren't too resiklus-like, and meaning no offence, sir, she might be Miss Joan."

"It can't be. John would know if it was;" and, sighing, he got up to depart.

At the gate John was standing with the horse.

"I shan't want you just yet, John," said he. "At the end of the week I'm going up to London on business. I'll write to you from there."

"Thank you, sir, he responded, without moving the horse's head. "Would you mind doing me a special favor, sir? It's only to walk to the end of the lane and to look across the downs towards Uppers. I'll hold the horse. You might see somebody you know, sir."

"What do you mean?" demanded his master, the color rising in his face.

"I'm bound not to say any more, sir, but do go!" entreatingly.

In a moment the two men's eyes met, then Tom Arbuthnot was striding down the lane as if his heels were winged instead of spurred. At the bottom of the lane he turned to the right.

Coming towards him in the distance, but not near, too far off to be recognized with certainty, was a slight girlish figure, clad in a long cloak, a close bonnet on her head. Tom hastened his pace to her. When the young man was within a yard of her, the girl looked up; then with a stifled cry, she turned to flee; but it was of no use; in a moment he had clasped her in his arms.

"Let me go! Let me go!" she panted.

"Promised!"

"Let me! You've promised to be—to be my wife!"

"No! We are not married! It was a—"

"I told you so? Come—you must tell me everything, from the moment I left!" authoritatively.

"But I've promised. She made me—"

"Never mind!" Tom's arm was still round her. "Listen, dear," said he persuasively. "We have met and we have—" For that you are not responsible. So come back quietly with me to Uppers house, and you shall tell me everything. After that, we'll decide what is right for you to do. You shall not be forced to do anything." As he spoke he drew her arm within his and turned to go back.

Appearing at the back door out of the kitchen, will yer? Mr. Tom and a friend of his want it for a talk!"

"Mercy sakes alive! Yer don't mean it, do yer?"

"Don't I? Here they come!"

The old dame hastily made the place "straight," and took herself off upstairs as Tom came in with Joan.

The young man closed the door, and, when he had seated Joan by the fire, unfastened her cloak and made her remove her bonnet, he stood in front of her and said:

"The first thing I want to know is how you came to be at the ball."

"Mrs. Holmby and her niece were invited. Emily, the niece, was taken ill, and as Mrs. Holmby knew that there were not many girls, she took me instead. I had no dress, so Emily lent me hers."

"How came you to be left behind!"

"Emily was taken worse, and a messenger was sent for her aunt, who went off at once, without speaking to me, although she asked Mrs. Cator, a friend of hers, to look after me and bring me home. I did not know that, and when the time came to go, of course I was looking for Mrs. Holmby, and Mrs. Cator was looking for me. At last she left, thinking I had gone home with some other friend, and——"

"I understand all that, dear. Now tell me how you came here."

"When Mrs. Holmby found I did not come home, she became alarmed, and sent to Mrs. Cator and then to the hotel where the dance was held. At the hotel they told her that a young lady and gentleman had driven away together some time after the dance was over. When Mrs. Holmby heard that, she telegraphed to our step-mother, who came down by the afternoon train, and saw Mrs. Holmby first, then sent for me. I told her everything—how you had waited with me after the ball was over, hoping some one would come and fetch me; how you had tried to get me a room at the hotel, but couldn't because they were full; how you had hired a carriage and driven over the border; how—how——" The girl hesitated. So far she had spoken in a low monotonous tone, but now she paused and looked down.

"All right, dear! You told her that I loved you, and that we were married according to Scotch law. Now go on! What did she say to that?"

"She was furious! She called me awful names! She said that our marriage was illegal—that you had done what you did only out of pity because I had lost my character. She said that, if I didn't do as she told me, she would have you made a convict for running away with me, as I was not of age."

"Made a convict! Bosh! What next?"

"She frightened me so that I promised never to see you again and to do whatever she wanted. Then she took me straight away without letting me say 'Good-bye' to Mrs. Holmby. We went to London and slept there, and in the morning I found she had taken all my clothes away and left only these common things in their place.

"I was locked in my room all day, and at night I was brought down here. She made me wear a thick veil until we got out of the train, and then she brought me a long way in a carriage. After we got out of the carriage she gave me some money, and told me to see if the people would take me in here."

"But why did you call yourself 'Wilkins?'"

"She told me to do so. She hoped that my name might be forgotten, and my place know me no more."

"How tragic!" said Tom scoffingly. "Well, both her wishes shall be fulfilled. Look here, my sweet! I'll get a marriage license, and we'll be married in a church the day after to-morrow."

"But I've promised——"

"You promised me before you promised her!"

"I'm not of age."

"I'll risk that. If she makes trouble, we'll spread over the whole length and breadth of the land full particulars of the way in which she has treated you. But she won't dare to do so. My father'll keep her in check. You see she's my step-mother as well as yours. To fancy that both our fathers, both widowers, should have been such fools as to marry such a creature."

"You're sure you're not marrying me to—to—because—because—— You know what she said, Tom."

"I'm marrying you because you are the only girl I have ever loved, because we are married, or as good, if we're not. I don't doubt you could make it pretty hot for me if I tried to marry any one else."

"But I wouldn't. I'd——"

"Look here, Joan—if you say another word I'll smother you—with kisses."

Joan instantly became silent, but that did not save her from them.

STAGE HEROES AS ATHLETES.

The man who, nowadays, wishes to shine as the hero of melodrama must not only be able to act—he must, in many cases, be somewhat of an athlete too.

The craze for sensationalism on the stage has led to plays being written in which the principal performers are expected to do things calculated to try the muscles of anyone not in good training.

There was a play seen not long since, in which the hero found himself on one side of a deep ravine, while the villain was about to murder his child on the other side.

The only way to cross the gulf was to spring to a tree-bough which grew part of the way across, and passalong it hand over hand.

The jump was not too easy for every actor to do, but there was worse to follow, for, when he had successfully crossed, he must place the child on his back and start to return the way he came.

A "dummy" child was used for this part of the scene, and as it had been utilized in the country for a long time, and thrown about carelessly from week to week, the sawdust with which the figure was stuffed had gathered so much damp that it weighed twice as much as the real child would have done.

When the hero reached the centre of the bough with this incubus on his shoulders, the villain pursued him, and there was enacted a realistic knife fight in the air, each actor hanging from the tree with one hand and fighting with the other.

Saturally, the villain was eventually struck down into the depths below, and the victorious hero was left hanging to speak the "tag," and await the fall of the curtain. It was no joke, after the exertion of crossing the branch and doing the fight, to find breath enough to make the four lines of "poetry," which were the cue for the curtain to descend, heard throughout a large theatre.

There are not many more awkward positions for speaking with any force than lying on one's back securely tied. It way seem easy enough to an audience for a representative of persecuted virtue to reach the general ear with cries for help, when thus bound down in the track of a railway train, motor car, steam roller, or any other of the engines called in to the aid of the modern stage desperado; but, in reality, it is no light task. If the head happens to be down the slope of the stage, every effort to shout brings a sensation of choking and utter helplessness.

There are more romantic positions in which to snatch your lady-love from the jaws of impending death than hanging, head downwards, by the knees from the branch of a tree; yet this is what the hero of a drama now on the stage is expected to do.

As the lady is carried past in the arms of a mounted ruffian at full gallop, she must be grasped by her lover, lifted clear of horse and rider, and held aloft until the curtain falls.

These exciting situations always occur at the end of acts, and it is well for the dramatic author that it is so, for in his hunger for sensational effects he often gets his characters into positions from which it would be impossible to rescue them with any semblance of dignity in sight of the audience.

There is an art in carrying fainting heroines about the stage. One of the most essential details is, when the lady is slung well over the shoulder, for both bearer and burden to draw long breaths and hold them until the carrying business is over.

One actor has painful recollections of a certain six months, during every night of which, Sundays excepted, he had to carry a lady weighing more than one hundred and fifty pounds over his shoulder, while he hurled defiance at an entire army at the top of his voice, and finally in a sword fight, killed six savages in two and a half minutes. It looked very effective from the audience's point of view, judging by the lavish applause evoked, but his feelings as he staggered under that load of solid femininity were anything but heroic.

"Grog," the sea term for rum and water, is supposed to have derived its name from the English Admiral Vernon, who wore grogram breeches, and hence was called "Old Grog." About the year 1740 he ordered his sailors to dilute their rum with water.

At Home and Abroad.

In some parts of England it is believed that hedgehogs foresee and by their uneasy actions foretell a storm.

The costliest macadam on record once paved the streets of Kimberley, South Africa. This celebrated roadbed was studded with diamonds, and hundreds of valuable gems were taken from it.

Clean linen seems to be one of the difficulties of life, down at Johannesburg. Some time ago a laundry firm in Cape Town imported a number of laundrymaids, and their handiwork was at once the joy and pleasure of the inhabitants. Johannesburg, however, suffered acutely from the lack of good washing, and the laundrymaids, attracted by the high wages offered them in the city of gold, have departed to the Transvaal.

The tomato is popular with all classes in Italy. In every home and cottage the preserving of tomatoes is carried on. Terraces, balconies, and even the flat roofs of the houses, are half covered with plates containing the fruit. It is a picturesque sight when the women are to be seen flitting about on the roofs and terraces, attending to the deep red preserve, their colored handkerchiefs flung over their heads to screen them from the rays of the burning sun when it is at its fiercest.

At one time the laws of Germany required every mechanic, at the expiration of his term of apprenticeship, to travel from place to place for the next succeeding three years. He was not allowed to remain over three months in one town, but must keep on like the Wandering Jew. In several of the large places through which he passed there were inns where he might get a supper, lodging and breakfast, as well as a few pence, to enable him to continue his journey, all at the state's expense. At the end of the allotted three years, the wanderer was supposed to have seen something of the world, and was then permitted to settle down where he liked and work at his trade; hence the origin of the word "journeyman."

An eminent surgeon is authority for saying that surgery of the internal organs of the body is attended with so little risk when antiseptic methods are employed that it is a matter scarcely worth worrying about. This is a method of curing diseases that have heretofore been treated almost entirely by medicines and exceedingly powerful medicines were required. But the microscope, the electric battery, and the germ destroyer have been doing a great work, and millions of suffering human beings have had occasion to bless the skill, genius, and patient researches of those who have given long years of intelligent labor to the study of bacteriology, and the best methods to render surgery safe and painless.

The seat of that invaluable quality, tact, is said to be in our fingers. Hence, physiologists as well as psychologists are said to devote special attention to the study of the human digit. Francis Galton pointed out years ago that the delicate lines in our finger-tips may become means of identifying persons, since these lines vary with every individual, and remain the same all through life. A French savant has gone a step further, and after a number of experiments, has come to the conclusion that not only the lines themselves, but the way in which people touch and handle objects, reveal their character and aptitudes. Thus, by causing a number of persons to take up a ball of soft putty he has at once obtained the lines by which he identifies, and the impression, more or less strong, by which he can tell whether a person's capabilities lean toward a professional or an artistic career.

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Our Young Folks.

TO THE EQUATOR.

BY A. E. B.

SO Ben the sailor has been talking, has he? Well, he always was a long-winded chap! You liked his merman story, did you? What's that you say: "One half the world doesn't know how the other half lives?" Very true! Which reminds me of another little adventure all my own—which happened shortly after the merman business. Let me see!

This time the "Jolly Dogs" was homeward bound, and lay becalmed in the Doldrums. What! you don't know where the Doldrums are? Well, then, I must tell you it's a region about the equator, just between the "trades," where it's as calm as a mill-pond and the sailors go about whistling for a breeze, and not even a cat's paw is stirring.

You are grilled and frizzled and baked by the sun, which is always right overhead, the pitch bubbles and boils in the seams of the deck-planks, and every bit of iron about the ship feels red hot to the touch.

The night is as broiling as the day, so that you can't sleep a wink, you feel as limp as a rag and as lively as a stuffed owl. That's about the size of the Doldrums.

Well, week dragged after week in this sickening kind of way, when one day the cook brought word to the captain:

"The water is all out," says he; "not a blessed drop in the tank!" says he.

"Shiver my timbers," says the captain, "then we must get some."

So he calls the chief mate, and, says he:

"Mr. Smith" (for that was his name) "do you take the long boat," says he, "Make for the shore. Take a score or so of casks with you, and bring them back full of water."

I was close by when the order was given, and I up and said:

"If you please, sir, I have never set foot on Africa's golden sands. I should dearly love to go, too."

"All right, then, Freddy, my lad," says he; "but be good, and keep out of mischief."

By this time the boat lay under our counter, suspended from the davits, so in I tumbled, and over the oily water we pulled in the direction where the shore should be, for we couldn't see it as yet. By and by we made out a long low line of palms, and heard the distant screams of the parrots and chatter of monkeys. Oh, my! didn't the cloves and cinnamon smell lovely, and didn't the scent of the cayenne pepper make us sneeze! At last we got into shoal water, and running the boat in among the mangrove bushes, we landed on the coral strand. Alligators? Oh, yes; there were plenty of them drawn up on the beach, looking like a lot of old tree trunks.

There were any quantity of man-eating sharks, too, in the offing; but, bless you, we didn't pay any heed to them, but let them flop their ugly tails and long for what they couldn't get.

Within easy distance of our landing-place was a spring of water, clear as a crystal, with which the lads Tars filled their casks; and while they did so, I just took a short tumble in the jungle. Wasn't I afraid? Not me! What was there to be afraid of? If you're only half spry, snakes and such-like venom haven't a chance; for all you have to do, if they show fight, is to snatch them up by the tail, swing them round your head till they're giddy, and then just chuck them away. As to the wild beasts, I knew that I could quell the best of them with my eye.

Yes, I believe you, the human eye is a wonderful organ. And if you've any doubts of its effect, you only try to stare out of countenance the very next lion you meet running loose; when, instead of attacking you, see if he doesn't tuck his tail between his legs and skedaddle like winking! But there! it's one thing to preach, and quite another to practise; and if you haven't your wits about you handy, instead of attempting to travel you'd best stay at home and warm your toes by the fire.

Well, I hadn't gone far into the jungle, when I spied a big nest, low down near the ground, and in it, behold! were half a dozen eggs. I was always a beggar for bird-nesting, when I was a lad, and I stretched out my hand and grabbed one of the eggs, when I felt a gripe on my arm and a growl of anger, clutching to my ear, as much as to say:

"Let that egg be, you!" "You just keep your hands off my eggs, young man." A glance over my shoulder showed me old Mother Ostrich, looking just as fierce as you please.

"All right," I said. "Keep your back hair on, old lady; I don't want your old eggs; but," I said, "if I promise not to touch them, you must give me a ride."

And not waiting for a reply, I jumped on her back; she seemed quite to understand, and without more ado started off. My stars, how she went! Slick through the jungle, out upon the level plain beyond, making a bee-line for a range of distant hills.

"It's not the miles we travel, my boys,
It is the pace that kills."

I'm not quite sure if that's the correct quotation; any way, it's good enough for me. I pon my word, I gasped for breath, and felt myself rapidly growing black in the face, when he neared those same hills and brought up suddenly by the dwelling of one of the old inhabitants.

Akishakishm, for such was his name—sat as cool as a cucumber awaiting our approach; he was a warrior of gigantic proportions, a leopard-skin was cast over his limbs, he had a head-dress of feathers, ear-rings in his ears, and under his right arm he carried one of his household gods—a very good imitation bust in bronze-magenta china.

"What would his palface brother with Akishakishm?" said he in measured accents.

"Well, old horse," I said, "if you'd just tip us your flipper, and help us on this rampageous wild beast, and I can answer you when I've got my wind."

And I wasn't sorry to get upon my pins again, I can tell you.

So Mother Ostrich went back to her eggs, and I sat me down by the side of Akishakishm, and told him that my mind was open to expansion in a word, that I yearned to see all I could see. To which he replied:

My palface brother shall soon see Polka-polkee, the black snake war dance; Apee-apee, the big gorilla; Hip-hip-hooray, the hippopotamuses; and bangle-jangle, the forest primeval. Akishakishm has spoken."

The darkie next proceeded to shut up shop, so as to secure his den against thieves, I suppose, during his absence.

The cave had only a narrow hole for a front door, and this he closed by rolling a big stone against it, and on the stone the wily savage wrote in chalk,

"BACK IN TEN MINUTES."

He happened to regard this effort of genius with great satisfaction, and turned to me said:

"Paleface brother, scorchem-friem, the sun, glides into the golden west; let us follow the open trail into Jungle-jangle, the forest primeval. Akishakishm has spoken."

"Good," I replied; "truly the noble blackskin hath spoken well. Lead on, old Josser—I follow thee!"

Whereupon the simple child of Nature threw his leopard-skin around him, and armed only with an innocent-looking stick his deadly blow-pipe, glided like a phantom into the yawning passes of the hills.

I quickly followed. On either side of the narrow way the bare rocks slick up into the sky, which looked like a narrow bit of ribbin with a star peeping through here and there.

A step or two farther and it was as dark as pitch. Sailors are like cats, you know—they can see in the dark; and so 'twas all one and the same to me. Oh, yes! No doubt there were plenty of snakes and scorpions lying around, but I contorted myself with the thought that my noble bare-footed friend led the van, and would have the privilege of treading on them first.

Well, for some time we followed a blind trail, and then the path widened and it got lighter. Then we came to a sign-post with two arms, one of them pointing forward "TO JUNGLE-JANGLE," and the other backward "TO DARKEST AFRICA," through which, of course, we'd just passed.

We had gone but a short distance farther when Akishakishm, laying his hand on his lips, uttered the impressive exclamation "Wagh!"

Then creeping cautiously forward we suddenly saw through an opening in the trees such a sight as never was. We had come upon the happy home of Apee-apee, the big gorilla.

Mamma gorilla and baby were in the parlor looking out of the window, and below in the garden was papa gorilla, a benevolent, mild-looking old fellow, affectionately regarding snakes—snaky, the deadly cobra, and Mr. Rattlesnake, and was seeming the most pleased he could be. Methought I could hear papa gorilla say, "You do well to trust your self to my hands, you'll find a different creature before I've done with you."

Ha, ha!

The farther we went the more primeval grew the forest. What was it like? Well, you just fancy a mixture of a big forest, the Zoo, the Dismal Swamp and the hottest room in a Turkish bath. Now multiply them by a thousand, chuck in a million or so of colored minstrels and you've got an idea of an African primeval.

What's that you say? "Did I see any cannibals?" Bless you, all the folks I saw were cannibals, every-man-Jack of them: what else should they be?

We saw them gliding through the mazy dance before regaling themselves on stewed grandfather.

If you look carefully at the idea you will see in the midst of a blaze a sort of cross-stick arrangement, from which hung the big pot that contained the stew.

The blackamoors danced round, waving their shields and spears and singing something like this:

"Grandfather stew's uncommonly good
When the old gent isn't too tough;
But if he's very scraggy and lean,
A spoonful's quite enough!
Put in the pepper and salt,
Put in the mustard and spice,
When grandfather's toothsome and tender,
What other stew is so nice?"

"And now my gay and festive," said I to the darkie, "now for Hip-hip-hooray, the hippopotamus. There's no time to be lost, for:

'My skiff is waiting at the strand,
And my bark is on the sea;
Soon, soon, my lily hand I'll wave
And bid farewell to thee!'"

"Wagh!" said the old Johnny; "paleface brother's words make heavy the heart of Akishakishm." Then he says, says he: "Hip-hip-hooray lives in Quaggy-waggee, the great marsh; Akishakishm will seek Tusky-Ruskee, the wise elephant."

Well, I waited so long for the old heathen that I began to wonder if he'd skeladdled altogether, when he came tooling along on the back of the elephant.

I climbed up beside him, and we made tracks all night through the primeval, taking turn and turn about as best we could to snatch forty winks or drive old pillar-legs.

In the morning we brought up alongside Quaggy-waggee, the great marsh. Hip-hip-hooray was at home; we found him at his bath, and he agreed at once to take me to the great salt water.

But Akishakishm led me to understand that his heart was broken at the thought of parting from me. I cheered him as well as I could, and told him to keep up his courage; however, nothing would do but he must go with me a part of the way.

As to the primeval animals, they turned out in a crowd, and gave us three cheers; to is to say, the elephants all trumpeted three times. Ah, don't tell me dumb animals have no feelings!

To make a long story short, "hippo" put me ashore on the other side of the marsh, and I made tracks as fast as my pins would move for the landing-place.

My wig! I was only just in time, for when I reached it, the last water-keg had been carried aboard the boat, and the men were actually shoving off for the Jolly Dogs, thinking I'd been made a meal of by lions and things. Yes, 'twas a near shave, you bet!

Marvellous, eh? Well, I daresay you think so. It's curious, but other fellows have made the very same remark! After all, you know, truth is always stranger than fiction, and I don't believe in cramming folk with a lot of humbug.

I've told you my little adventure to the best of my memory; and there—you can take it or leave it, it's all the same to me.

MORAL DUTY.—Moral duty not only demands intellectual discipline, it also requires that the ends in view may be good. A man may have health and wealth, opportunity and powers, culture and genius, patience and energy, yet not be a moral man, because he uses all these things for selfish or even criminal purposes. But when the motive is good and the aim beneficent, no effort is too great to bring every power into play and every talent into exercise to compass his purpose. A strong mind may exist without a pure and noble aim or a devoted spirit; but no worthy design can be carried out, and no devoted spirit can triumph without the co-operation of whatever knowledge or reading and power can be brought to bear upon it. This does not lead to and sentimental the mental and moral natures, it rather tends to allow that, while they may be closely linked, they can only work advantageously in close connection and in perfect harmony.

The World's Events.

Each salmon produces about 2,000,000 eggs.

Horses succumb to cold quicker than any other animal.

The telephone is about to be introduced into China.

Potatoes in Greenland never grow larger than a marble.

Japan has a written history extending over 2500 years.

In Corea umbrellas are of oiled paper, have no handles and are simply worn over the hat.

The hill people of Assam reckon the time and distance by the number of quids of betel nuts chewed.

In the royal aquarium of St. Petersburg are fish which have been on exhibition for 150 years.

It is estimated that two years are required for the Gulf stream water to travel from Florida to the coast of Norway.

Originally the banana was a native of the Eastern tropics, but now it is cultivated in all tropical and sub-tropical countries.

The library of Gottingen has a Bible written on palm leaves. There are five thousand three hundred and seventy-three pages, each made of a single leaf.

The fish hooks used to-day are of precisely the same shape as those employed twenty centuries ago. The only difference is in the material. Then they were of bronze; now they are of steel.

The ears of most defenseless animals—like the rabbit are turned backwards, because these creatures are in constant apprehension of pursuit; hunting animals have their ears turned forward.

A German ornithologist enumerates twenty-three species of birds that have recently become extinct, and twenty others that are threatened with early extinction. The destruction is chiefly due to man, cats, rats and hogs.

One of the most singular peculiarities of the floral world is the evening primrose, which opens about six P. M. with an explosion not very loud or formidable, but still quite perceptible to anyone who is watching the bud. It remains open all night.

A Georgia author sent a short story to 150 newspapers and magazines combined. It took all of them just three years to decline it; but he was not discouraged, and during the fourth year of its itinerary it was accepted and paid for.

For a fee of from two to eight cents a message, one may talk from even the smallest of Swiss towns over a long distance telephone system to any part of the country. The instruments are kept in perfect repair and the service is said to be excellent.

It is a universal custom of the Moslems to write the following phrase at the commencement of every book, whatever be the subject, and to pronounce it on commencing every lawful act of any importance: "In the name of the Compassionate, the Merciful."

In Paris, every dish, pot and pan used in the public restaurants are under the care of an inspector. The law forbids the use of lead, zinc, and galvanized iron in the manufacture of cooking utensils. It orders that all copper vessels be tinned and kept in good condition.

The notion that the Sahara is altogether a barren and worthless waste is void of the truth. In 1867 there are 9,000,000 sheep in the Algerian Sahara alone, besides [illegible] goats and 200,000 camels. On the oases there are 1,500,000 date palms, giving dates worth $3,000,000 a year.

Chelsea district, in London, utilizes its street refuse by separating the rags and paper, which are converted into brown wrapping paper, while the rest of the refuse is burned in the furnaces of the reduction works and the residuum is used in brickmaking.

In the coast districts of South America the staff of life is the [illegible] on the Pampas, dried beef, and in Eastern Asia, rice, either in the form of a soup or a thick gruel. "He has eaten his last rice," say the Chinese, as description of a funeral.

For many years furriers have [illegible] that skins of polar bears which they have received have been mutilated by the cut of the nose. It has been discovered that this is a result of a superstitious belief prevalent among the Eskimo, that whenever a polar bear is killed his nose must be cut off and thrown upon the ice or bad luck will follow the hunter.

In a certain coffee tavern above [illegible] tea and tips are complained of [illegible] All along the walls of the [illegible] several authorities [illegible] shared such with a label [illegible] understand [illegible] tea, tea. You [illegible] a glass boy it up to the proprietor [illegible] tea in the cup, and you are [illegible] tea.

FOR YOU AND ME.

BY J. S. M.

For you and me the world is fair,
And love and beauty fill the air;
The sun rides through the azure sky,
And beams upon us from on high,
Then sets in one grand crimson flare.
The moon that soon succeeds him there
Bathes earth in silver splendor rare,
And makes dark corners on the sky
For you and me.

The sea, the wood, the meadows where
The daisies bloom, and maidenhair—
The hills, the lakes that in them lie,
Were made, I've just discovered why—
For you and me!

THE BIRTH OF A WORD.

In any good dictionary will be found the word: "To burke," with the definition "to murder, particularly by suffocation." This word has a most interesting but ghastly origin.

Before 1832, in Great Britain, the progress of surgery was greatly hampered by the obstacles placed in the way of the study of anatomy. Bodies from the gallows formed the only recognized legal supply of subjects for dissection, and the jail deliveries were utterly insufficient to keep pace with the demands of the medical schools. The very poorest classes shrank from surrendering the bodies of their relatives to the scalpel, and the hideous custom of ransacking the graves and disinterring the newly buried dead was resorted to by gangs of ruffians. On such agents as these surgeons and lecturers had to depend, prices ruled high, and few questions were asked. Wherever there was a school of medicine the need arose, and more especially in Edinburgh, where criminals were fewer and anatomical students more numerous than in the southern capital.

On the morning of Friday, October 31st, 1828, there came into a grocer's shop in the Westport a little, undersized, middle-aged woman to beg a meal. She had come, she said, from Glasgow to join her son, but he had left their lodging in the Pleasance, and she did not know how to gain tidings of him, and was without a friend in the city.

Her story, as she poured it out to the shop-boy behind the counter, attracted the attention of a customer, William Burke, who in the pretended fulness of his heart offered to give breakfast to the poor woman, and he completed his purchase and went away with her. His home was near at hand, in that picturesque but squalid Old Town of Edinburgh which was then almost indescribable with its filth and overcrowding, and was packed full of the most destitute and abandoned characters.

Burke's "house" consisted of a single room in an old tenement, situated on the lowest floor, sunk below the level of the street. There were two other rooms in this basement, tenanted by families of the name of Law and Connoway; Burke was living with a woman, Helen McDougal, who passed as his wife, and though their room was by no means a large one, they shared it with lodgers, a married couple called Gray. The stranger was given some porridge and milk and set down to rest; it was Hallow E'en; whisky was produced, and the neighbors came in and took their drams.

Burke questioned the guest about her old home and family, till finally he offered her a lodging for the night. There were limits, however, even to Westport hospitality, and to accommodate her it was necessary to evict the lodgers, so Burke arranged for them to sleep at the house of his friend Hare in Tanner's Close hard by. This was settled, and the old woman was only too glad to sit down by the fire and feel that for that day, at any rate, she had no further cares.

About nine the next morning Burke sent up for Gray and his wife to come and have breakfast, and on their arrival they found that Mrs. Campbell, for so the old woman gave her name, was no longer there, and they heard McDougal say that she had been so troublesome in the night they had turned her out. After breakfast there was more whisky and plenty of merriment, but there was something about Burke and his anxiety lest any one should go near a heap of straw and litter at the foot of the bed which aroused Mrs. Gray's curiosity. Searching they found the old woman's body.

They at once informed the police, who arrested Burke and his female companion as they were coming up the stair. The corpse was not to be found, but it was ascertained that shortly after six o'clock Burke and McDougal with Mr. and Mrs. Hare had all been seen coming up from the sunk flat accompanied by a porter carrying a packing-case, the top of which was stuffed with straw. The next morning it was resolved to search the dissecting-rooms, and the first place visited was the museum of Dr. Knox, the foremost anatomical teacher of the day, in Surgeon Square. The police learnt from Paterson, the porter, that a "subject" had been brought in the night before, and on entering a cellar they found in an old tea-chest the body of a woman which Gray and his wife identified as that of Campbell. From what Paterson told them with regard to how he had become possessed of it, the police immediately arrested the two Hares.

These Hares turned King's evidence in the charge of murdering the old woman brought against Burke, and he was convicted, the verdict of "Not Proven" being entered for Helen McDougal.

He was not executed until January 28, 1829. In the interval he made full confession. He and Hare owned to sixteen murders in the course of a few months, and but for the accidental discovery of the old woman's body the number might have increased indefinitely. The crimes had been suggested to them by the liberal price given by Dr. Knox for the body of an old pensioner who died a natural death in Hare's house. The bodies were all taken to Knox's dissecting-rooms. Suffocation was always the means of murder resorted to.

After Burke's hanging Hare was released. It is not known when he died. Though saved from the gallows, vengeance followed him: his identity became known to some fellow-workmen, who threw him in quicklime and blinded him, and his last days were spent as a sightless beggar on the streets of London.

Grains of Gold.

He who turns from evil habits does himself a good turn.

The imaginary grievances of life are more trying than the real ones.

No man is master of himself so long as he is a slave to anything else.

The easiest and best way to expand the chest is to have a good heart in it.

Common conversation is the best mirror of a person's mind and heart.

He that will not look before him, will have to look behind him, with regret.

Uneasiness is a species of sagacity; a passive sagacity. Fools are never uneasy.

A thousand parties of pleasure do not leave a recollection worth that of one good action.

Look on slanderers as direct enemies to civil society; as persons without honor, honesty or humanity.

When a man has no design but to speak plain truth he may say a great deal in a very narrow compass.

Femininities.

Silence is golden, but it makes a woman feel very poor if she cannot talk.

In the Isle of Man it is the custom of parties about to be married to carry salt in their pockets.

Every woman has an idea that it ought to be a pleasure for a man to work for money for her to spend.

In London alone over 10,000 men, women, and children gain their daily bread by pocket-picking.

Carlotta, widow of Maximillian, it is rumored, will shortly make a journey to Mexico, to visit the scene of her husband's death.

"I'm afraid this picture is spoiled. The baby moved her head." Mother: "Oh, that doesn't matter! Her dress looks perfectly lovely!"

Daughter: I love him. He is the light of my life. Father: Well, that's all right, but I object to having my house lit up by him after midnight."

"I married Horace to reform him," sighed the young wife, "and the only habit I've broken him of is parting his hair in the middle. He doesn't part it at all now."

Mrs. Justwed: These eggs are a little too hard, dear. Mrs. Justwed: Yes, dear John, I know it. But they boiled for more than an hour, and yet they would not get soft.

Velvet pile can be raised by dampling the wrong side with clean cold water, then holding it tightly across the face of a hot iron, and brushing the crushed part with a stiff brush.

Vexed wife: There is no calamity can befall a woman that I have not suffered. Amiable Husband: Wrong, my dear; now, you have never been a widow. Wife: I said calamity, sir.

"Did your late boarder succeed in removing all his effects?" "I should say not," rejoined the landlady. "I don't suppose I can ever get the cigarette smell out of the curtains."

"Before we were married, Henry, you used to bring me a pound of candy every evening." "I haven't forgotten it, Amanda. By the way, dear, I paid your last dentist's bill this morning. It was $25.00."

Lightlove: At last, dear Sophia, we are alone, and I can tell you that I lo— Sophia: Oh, please, no, Mr. Lightlove, don't tell me here. Lightlove: Why not? There are no witnesses. Sophia: That's just it!

Upholster: Madam, this is a fine reception chair. Our latest design. Try it, please. Mrs. Society: Dear me! how uncomfortable it is! I couldn't sit in it for five minutes. Upholsterer: That's it exactly, madam. You see, it is intended for callers.

There are young men who cannot hold a skein of yarn for their mothers without wincing, but who will hold one hundred and twenty-five pounds of a neighboring family for the best part of the evening, with a patience and docility that are certainly phenomenal.

Spartan virtue survives in Pond Town, Me. A young miss on Skunk Hill is doing penance for carrying a bottle of cider to a sick neighbor. A cousin of hers, requested to go to the store for a plug of tobacco, resolutely declined to handle the weed for love or money. A few years ago the village restaurant was deprived of half its profits because the wife of the keeper refused to serve customers with cigars.

The most stupendous piece of flattery ever tendered the Queen of England, was perhaps that to which a Siamese Ambassador once thus gave expression: "One cannot fail to be struck by the aspect of the august Queen of England, or fail to observe that she must be of pure descent from a race of goodly and warlike kings of the earth, in that her eyes, complexion, and bearing are those of a beautiful and majestic white elephant."

A pretty story is told of the Queen of Italy, or rather of herself and her royal consort. "I am too old to wear white gowns any longer," said Queen Margherita, not without a touch of regret, one day to her husband. "We'll take a fortnight to consider it," was the reply. At the end of that time a huge box reached the Queen packed with lovely white gowns of every description, accompanied with the brief line—"The King's decision."

The German Empress is a very early riser, and however late she may have been up the previous evening her Majesty never fails to make her appearance at the early breakfast of the Emperor, even when, as sometimes happens, Kaiser Wilhelm wishes to breakfast as early as 5.30 A. M. She also often accompanies him on his morning rides, and, as well as attending to her numerous State duties, pays a great deal of attention to household affairs, always having the menus of the meals served to the Imperial table and in the nursery shown to her every morning. The Empress is one of the most tender mothers in the world, and whatever her State duties may have been, and however late she has to retire to rest, when at home, her Majesty never fails to visit her children's nurseries the last thing each night.

Masculinities.

If you will not hear reason, she will surely rap your knuckles.

If hell is paved with good intentions, it is roofed with lost opportunities.

There is many a man whose tongue might govern multitudes, if he could only govern his tongue.

"Tommy," said the teacher, "what is meant by nutritious food?" "Something that ain't got no taste to it," replied Tommy.

We should educate the whole man—the body, the head, the heart—the body to act, the head to think, and the heart to feel.

Too many young men believe that "the world owes every man a living," and that it requires no effort on a man's part to make the collection.

"Dawson is awfully in love with himself." "Well, it's natural that a man should reciprocate the affection of the only person who ever admired him."

A Western paper chronicles a marriage in this suggestive style:—"The couple resolved themselves into a committee of two, with power to add to their number."

Mrs. De Ruffle: If you ever did any good in this wide world, I'd like to know what is it. Mr. De Ruffle: Well, for one thing, I saved you from dying an old maid.

"Is it true," asked the professor, "that a trombone player saved the life of Frederick the Great?" "It is," replied the student. "How?" "Frederick killed him."

Mrs. Fashion: We women are much more enterprising than you men. Her Husband: Quite true. You often manage to buy more in an hour than we can pay for in a year.

Marquis de Quincey, a French sportsman who has lost one leg and walks about on crutches, has gone to West Africa to shoot big game in the Footah Jalu country and on the upper Niger.

The number of girl graduates in Nebraska, taken at random from fifty different high schools, exceeds the number of boy graduates considerably. There are two girls to each boy.

Benedict: Why won't she marry you? Is there another man in the case? Singleton: I'm afraid there is. Benedict: That so? Do you know who he is? Singleton: Yes, her father.

"Bluffy says that he cannot stand the mental strain of married life much longer." "What in the world is there to so tax his mind?" "Manufacturing excuses for getting home late at night."

"I don't mind babies at all," said the bald-headed man, as he sat down beside a woman with an infant in arms. "Don't you, really?" asked the mother, with a sweet smile. "No, never. My wife minds them."

We seldom find persons whom we acknowledge to be possessed of good sense except those who agree with us in opinion. When such occasions do occur, our self-love always induces a decision in favor of their judgment.

"You wish to join our staff as proof-reader?" Applicant: "Yes, sir. "Do you understand the requirements of that responsible position?" "Perfectly, sir. Whenever you make any mistakes in the paper, just blame 'em on me, and I'll never say a word.

Sir Augustus Lackcash, to tailor: My son tells me that you have allowed him to run a bill for three years. I have therefore come—— Tailor: Oh, pray, Sir Augustus, there is really no hurry! Sir A. L.: I know that, and therefore I have come to tell you that in future I want to get my clothes from you, too.

"Why do they always paint angels as blondes?" asked Mrs. Krank of her husband, as they stood looking at a picture. "Because," answered Mr. Krank, looking at his wife's dark hair, "artists wives are generally brunettes." There's a frightful frigidity in the atmosphere about the Krank mansion now.

A medical practitioner attributes the violent thirst which afflicts the majority of cyclists to the habit of breathing through the mouth while riding. The vigorous exercise causes all beginners, and many old riders, to breathe through the mouth, with the result that the lips and throat become dry and parched. The remedy, of course, is to keep the mouth shut.

An African missionary found the following poetical gem in the book of one of his native scholars:

"Steal not this book, you little goose,
For there's a jail in Syracuse."

He had been studying an old school book which a friend from America had sent.

"What a methodical fellow you are, Bobbs!" said Filkins, who had stepped into Bobbs' office during the latter's absence. "Why, what do you mean?" echoed Bobbs, just returned. "To think that you should lock all your drawers up when you are only going out for five minutes. I don't think that anybody would meddle with your papers." "Of course not," replied Bobbs, "but how did you find out that the drawers were locked?"

Latest Fashion Phases.

A good word to be said in favor of present fashions is that they allow much variety in every part of the costume. Thus in skirts, besides the sunray-plaited skirt, so delightful for very light materials, you can have either the perfectly plain bell shape, or the fan-pleated skirt, while both the Princess and the Amazon shape are also equally in favor.

The Princess dress, almost classical in its unassuming elegance, has always been a favorite with ladies of good taste and well proportioned figure. It is particularly fashionable again just now, not, however, always strictly in its genuine shape, that is, the skirt and bodice cut all in one.

In the modern Princess dress the skirt is, in most cases, either altogether or partly separate from the bodice, but this is so skillfully managed that only initiated eyes can detect it, and the graceful lines of the all-in-one shape remain the same.

By way of trimming, the Princess dress requires a tasteful sobriety, which, however, does not exclude elegance or even costliness; embroidery and lace applique discreetly studded with paillettes are distinctly suitable to the plainly laid on style of trimmings which are most in accordance with this shape of dress.

The newest style, and one which seems likely to remain long in favor, being both so simple and so pretty, is the fastening down on the side from the collar to the foot of the skirt. The trimming down the bodice generally consists in flutings of lace or chiffon, that on the skirt of fancy braid or embroidery, or the skirt remains slit open over a silk under skirt, which shows with the least movement.

The Amazon skirt is an extremely becoming one; very clinging at the top, it has all its fulness thrown to the back, giving that graceful sweep so distinctive for a true Parisian figure.

Some of the new woolens for early autumn dresses, are simply perfect in texture and in coloring. To the new shades already mentioned, I must add dream blue, a vague tint wavering between the periwinkle and hortensia blossom, seagull gray, soft and silvery, and pastal-green, ethereal and half effaced like tints in an ancient portrait in crayons.

One of the best couturieres, has just introduced a very stylish jacket, the Premier Consul jacket. It is of royal blue cloth, and open all the way down in front, with but very slightly curved facings of white cloth embroidered all over in a floral pattern. A high, square-cut collar comes up to the ears but remains open in front.

The back of the jacket is tight-fitting, and finished in a short round basque. The sleeves are mitten-sleeves, with a small bouffant at the top. This jacket is worn with a plain vest of white faille, trimmed across the front with blue braid and buttons, and trimmed on the left side with a white lace ruffle. The vest is finished with a standing-up collar, not more than half as deep as the blue cloth one.

The blouse is still fashionable. Only it has undergone numerous modifications; it is no longer the full loose bodice, bulging out from the waist. The modern blouse is, in fact, a moderately full bodice, gathered at the neck and waist.

Sometimes it is plain at the back, and gathered in front only, like a chemisette, and this is more particularly the case when meant to be worn under a bolero, or any sort of fancy open jacket. Otherwise the blouse is gathered both back and front, and continued under the belt into a very narrow basque.

The most novel fashion for a blouse bodice of this style is to have no seam in either front or back, and to fasten on either side with invisible hooks and eyes. Sometimes the blouse remains open at the sides, in that case it is made of very light or open-work material, gathered over a fitting bodice of some thin kind of silk.

Some blouse bodices are trimmed with plain facings or revers, others with deep collarettes, or with full flutings put on quite on the left side; all, however, are worn with a belt of some sort, whether they have a basque or not.

The belt is either of morocco leather with metal buckle and fastenings, of velvet with clasp and ornaments of cut steel, paste or enamelled silver, or again simply of gros grain ribbon with artistic buckle of old silver or nickel. The collar has become an important item in our toilets; it is incredible what variety of shape and style is lavished on this charming adjunct of an elegant toilet.

Glace silk may be used for fluted trimmings instead of chiffon, and has the advantage of being less easily crumpled. Do you know the new powdered glace silk? It is exquisite, shot of two soft shades of color, such as peach and Nile-green, biscuit and "ballerine," nickel and pale rose color, and powdered all over with white.

The jacket and collet continue to share favor. The basques of the former are now made considerably smaller, which make it more graceful and coquettish. It is either crossed in front or open to the waist; revers and facings are, like collars, of infinite variety.

The collet is daintier and more fluffy than ever; it is chiefly made of gauze, lace, and chiffon.

A jacket of the soft new cloth, called drap veloute, is fashionable just now, of the faintest shade of sand or chalk, with straight facings cut at right angles, and a collar forming epaulettes, both collar and facings trimmed with thick white embroidery, and a deep white leather belt with old-silver buckle. This belt is put on just over the tiny basque of the jacket, which is made like a bodice, and only remains slightly open in front.

As for the collet, it must be a very light affair; just a tiny yoke of guipure over silk, and all the rest in fluffy flutings of chiffon just coming down over the shoulders and up round the throat.

Among the prevalent styles of the Paris autumn season many beautiful gowns are noticeable. For one visiting-dress, pale lime-green silk is used, the skirt is plain, the full accordion-pleated bodice is confined round the waist by a puckered band of black satin, finished by a bow at the back; the small zouave is of black satin covered with lace; a pleating of black lace falls from the centre of the puff; the front of bodice, collar, and sleeves are trimmed with lace insertion. Black straw hat, trimmed with ribbon of the same color, as the dress, black osprey and pink roses.

In a beautiful walking-dress the material was heliotrope fine wool poplin the skirt is trimmed from the waist with two rows of black passementerie; the lower part of bodice is arranged in flat pleats, finished at the waist with passementerie; the yoke is covered with the material draped up the centre, it is finished with passementerie and deep silk and chenille fringe; the sleeves are puffed at the top, and are trimmed below the puff with passementerie. Hat of heliotrope straw trimmed with black feathers and rosettes.

Of a home dress the skirt was of green limousine, bound round the foot with green plaid silk, headed by a row of black ribbon velvet, with straps of velvet finished by small buttons standing out from it; the full bodice and sleeves are of the plaid silk, over which is worn a novel kind of zouave, trimmed like the skirt; the fronts of this zouave are cut in long points which cross each other, the right side fastening over to the left under an oval buckle; the turn-over collar of white silk is cut in tabs.

A handsome visiting dress of blue silk was accompanied by a mantle of blue velvet, turned back in front with revers of blue silk, trimmed with two widths of black ribbon velvet; the cape sleeves are trimmed with blue silk, bead, and sequin embroidery: the epaulettes are embroidered silk, finished by two pleated frills of silk; the collar is also finished with a pleating; vest of white silk, trimmed with narrow pleatings. Hat with blue velvet crown and straw brim, trimmed with a band of pink and green silk embroidery, a cluster of black ostrich feathers, and spray of pink roses.

Otter-colored cloth, finely striped with a lighter shade was seen in another walking dress. The skirt is one of the new shapes, of narrower width than has been worn of late; the jacket bodice has a fluted basque, edged with a light otter-colored mohair braid; it is worn with a white cambric front; an opening is made each side the front through which the waistband of white kid is passed; turn-over linen collar with ruby silk stock. Toque of fine cloth of the same color as the dress; it is arranged in soft folds, and is trimmed on the left side with two ostrich tips and osprey.

The demand for boleros continues, especially those in a thick make of guipure, which stand hard wear-and-tear.

Odds and Ends.

ON A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS.

Hints:—Carpets rubbed with a little benzine will keep moths away.

Warm salt water inhaled through the nostrils two or three times a day will cure cold and catarrh.

To renovate leather bags, etc., rub well with the white of an egg; this will also prevent the leather from cracking.

To clean brass ornaments wash the brass with rock alum boiled to a strong lye in the proportion of 1 oz to a pint of water; when dry rub with fine Tripoli.

In washing merino or natural wool underclothing, a teaspoonful of ammonia should be added to the warm water in which the articles are washed.

When sponges are very foul wash them in diluted tartaric acid, rinsing them afterwards in water; it will make them very soft and white.

To restore the color of cashmere that has been splashed with mud, sponge the discolored parts with water with a small piece of soda dissolved in it.

To free trees from caterpillars, etc., takes flower of sulphur 1 part, starch 3 parts; make into a thin paste with warm water, apply to the trees with a painter's brush.

Corks which have been steeped in vaseline are said to be an excellent substitute for glass stoppers. They are not in the least affected by acids, and never become fixed through long disuse.

Canning.—Fruit for canning must be freshly picked and a little under rather than over ripe. The pits of peaches and the cores of pears improve the flavor of their respective fruits. If removed, distribute a few peach pits in every jar and put a little muslin bag filled with cores in the center of pear jars.

The skins of green gage plums should be left on and pierced with a fork before they are cooked. The skins of all other common varieties should be removed. If plums and peaches are immersed in boiling water to loosen the skins, only a few should be treated at once, and these should first be put in a wire basket or sieve. After remaining two minutes or so dip in cold water and gently rub off the skins. A silver knife should be used to shred pineapple and to pare pears and quinces.

Peaches should be put in sirup as soon as pared, and pears and quinces into cold water, to prevent discoloration. Peaches are firmer and richer if allowed to remain overnight in the sirup before they are cooked. Five or six pits should be distributed through each quart jar.

The most delicate and natural flavor is obtained by cooking the fruit in the jars. This method also does away with the breakage from handling and adds greatly to its appearance. Pears and quinces are no exception to this rule, but as both are more quickly cooked tender in clear water it is more convenient to do so before they are put in sirup.

All old jars should be thoroughly cleansed with soda and boiling water, and the airtightness of every jar should be tested with water before it is filled with the fruit, which should be placed in the jar as fast as it is prepared, and the jar filled to the neck with sirup.

A flat bottomed kettle or an ordinary clothes boiler is convenient for cooking, and a board fitted to the bottom loosely and closely filled with inch auger holes obviates all danger of breakage. Put the rubber and cover in position, leaving the latter loose. Fill the boiler with warm water to the neck of the jars and boil gently until the fruit can be easily pierced with a fork.

No definite rule for cooking can be given. Ten minutes is usually long enough for berries, while the time required for larger and more solid fruits depends upon their ripeness. Experience soon makes one expert. Take each jar out on to a hot plate, fill to overflowing with boiling water and screw down the top. Tighten as it cooks and invert to be sure that it is airtight.

The jars should be wrapped in paper to exclude the light, which is more injurious than one is apt to think, and kept in a cool, dry place. The flavor of fruit is much improved if the oxygen is restored by removing the cover an hour or two before it is needed.

If rich fruit is desired, the following quantities of sugar for each pint jar will be satisfactory, but as sugar is not the "keeping power" much less or even none may be used: Raspberries, four ounces; whortleberries, four ounces; Bartlett pears, six ounces; peaches, five ounces; sour pears, eight ounces: plums, eight ounces; quinces, eight ounces.

Pimples.—1. It requires self-denial to get rid of pimples, for persons troubled with them will persist in eating fat meats and other articles of food calculated to produce them. Avoid the use of rich gravies, or pastry, or anything of the kind in excess. Take all the out-door exercise you can and never indulge in a late supper.

Retire at a reasonable hour, and rise early in the morning. Sulphur to purify the blood may be taken three times a week—a pinch or so in a glass of milk before breakfast. It takes some time for the sulphur to do its work, therefore persevere in its use till the humors, or pimples, or blotches, disappear. Avoid getting wet while taking the sulphur.

2 Try this recipe: Wash the face twice a day in warm water, and rub dry with a coarse towel. Then with a soft towel rub in a lotion made of two ounces of white brandy, one ounce of cologne, and one half ounce of liquid potassa. Persons subject to skin eruptions should avoid very salt or fat food. A dose of Epsom salts occasionally might prove beneficial.

Wash the face in a dilution of carbolic acid, allowing one teaspoonful to a pint of water. This is an excellent and purifying lotion, and may be used on the most delicate skins. Be careful about letting this wash get into the eyes.

Oil of sweet almonds, one ounce; fluid potash, one drachm. Shake well together, and then add rose water, one ounce; pure water, six ounces. Mix. Rub the pimples or blotches for some minutes with a rough towel, and then dab them with the lotion.

Dissolve one ounce of borax, and sponge the face with it every night. When there are grubs, rub on flour of sulphur, dry, after washing, rub well and wipe dry; use plenty of castile soap.

Dilute corrosive sublimate with oil of almonds. A few days' application will remove them.

Fried Tripe.—After the tripe has been cleaned in cold water, boil until tender; put it aside to cool; cut into pieces about the size of an oyster, dust with salt and pepper, then dip in beaten egg, then in bread crumbs; fry in smoking hot fat. Rub together two tablespoonfuls of butter, one tablespoonful of lemon juice, and a teaspoonful of parsley. Spread this over the fried tripe and serve at once.

To Cure Soft Corns.—Take a little common chalk, scrape it and put a pinch on the corn, and then bind with a piece of old linen, not too tightly. Repeat the application in a few days, when the corn will come off like a shell, and will be perfectly cured.

Warts.—To destroy warts, make a strong solution of common washing soda and water, wash the warts with this for a minute or two, and let the soda dry on them; repeat the washing several times a day until the warts disappear. Or rub them night and morning with a moistened piece of muriate of ammonia. They soften and dwindle away, leaving no such white marks as follow their dispersion with lunar caustic.

Chicken Patties.—Mince cold chicken, and stir it into a white sauce, made of milk thickened with cornflour, and flavored with pepper, salt, and butter. Line small patty-pans with puff paste, bake first, then fill with the mixture, and set in a hot oven for a few minutes to brown.

Victoria Pudding.—Boil two ounces of sago with six ounces of sugar in half a pint of water for three quarters of an hour, add six ounces of fresh fruit, again boil for an hour, and then put into a mould; let it stand until cold, then turn it out and pour a little syrup round the base. Milk may be eaten with it.

Stewed Prunes.—Wash quickly in cold water a pound and a half of prunes to remove the grit; if very fresh and moist, this will not be necessary. Put them into a pudding-basin with a quarter of a pound of sugar and enough cold water to cover them; put a plate over the basin, and set it in a moderate oven, to remain there until the prunes are sufficiently done for the stones to be easily pressed out of them, which must be ascertained by trying them from time to time with a silver fork.

To Blacken Tan Leather Boots and Shoes.—Rub every part of the boots or shoes well with a juicy potato cut in thick slices, and when dry, apply blacking in the usual way, taking care to put the blacking well on.

Bought and Sold.

BY T. B. C.

"CAN it be possible?" The words were spoken in an undertone, with a quick gasp for breath, and then the lady stood very still, looking down on the disordered drawer and the letters that lay on the top.

Little bundles of muslin and dimity, alternating with knots of faded ribbon and old lace, were scattered all around, for their owner had been searching among them for an old embroidery pattern; and so she had come suddenly upon the packet of old letters she had stowed away there more than two years before.

The letters were written by Mrs. Fleming's old schoolmate, Amy Norris, and the soft girlish handwriting spoke to her heart a whisper faint and tender from the olden time.

Dear Amy! She had been married three years before, and her station in life was far below that of Mrs. Fleming's; but the lady's eyes grew dim, as she unfastened the ribbon which, for two years, had held together those half dozen epistles.

Amy's sweet face seemed leaning up close to hers once more, and she saw the old brick houses, with their sloping roofs, where they had lived in the days that would never come back again.

But, as the packet fell from the loosened ribbon, it disclosed two other letters, and these called forth the exclamation, and brought the sudden paleness to Mrs. Fleming's face.

She thought those letters were all turned to ashes long ago,—that she had burned them on that terrible night when she buried away all the past. But now she saw how it was; in her haste and anguish she had mistaken the letters, and burned two of Amy's instead.

There was no one of all Mrs. Fleming's admirers to see her as she stood by the open drawer, her little fingers moving caressingly over those two letters; and it seemed almost a pity, for hardly ever had she looked more beautiful.

There was so much unstudied grace in her attitude, so much mournful pathos in her young face; and yet it was not best the world should read the story that until that hour had been written and rolled up and laid away in her own heart.

She had not seen his handwriting for two years; and yet how natural it looked! The bold, graceful capitals, the free, running hand, all had a language for her!

She knew, too, by the post-mark, which letters these were, and when they were written,—the first, so tender and loving, before he learned that she was about to be married to another,—the last, wild and reproachful, afterward!

How she had loved that man!—how the past came back to tell her of it! The old red brick house,—how it loomed up in the distant perspective, amid the cool summer nights, when she sat under the old portico all grown over with sweet-brier, and he sat there too!

But clearest and brightest and dearest of all, stood up, in that world of old memories, the new home which they were to have.

It was to be a little white cottage, with green window-blinds and a small garden in front. How she had dreamed about it—and of the flower-border running up to the steps!

What a happy, loving wife she expected to be in that dear little cottage home—going every morning through a round of delicious household duties; for Harry could only afford to keep one domestic.

And in the late afternoons, when the table was all laid, with its snowy cloth, when she would put on a white muslin dress (Harry liked white muslin), and a few rose-buds in her curls, and she would go out and wait for him at the garden gate.

How his handsome face would light up as he came round the corner and caught a glimpse of her, and a moment later his strong arm would be around her waist, and his low, deep, "My darling Laura!" would be the sweetest sound earth held for her. And, as that quiet domestic picture came up to confront her, the proud, elegant Mrs. Fleming bowed her head on her hands and sobbed like a child.

Then she laid her fingers on the letters with a nervous, timid glance around the room, for the lady's heart whispered that she was doing wrong,—that now she had no right to read them; and it was better to lay them in the grate yonder, where the fire was leaping up to fold them in its long, red arms.

"There can't be any harm in reading them over," she whispered, for her conscience needed a narcotic; "it is so long ago, and we shall never meet again."

So Mrs. Fleming opened the letters and read them. I cannot tell how they wrung her heart, particularly the last one, with its wild, frantic reproaches, and the love and the suffering so apparent through all.

"I was not so much to blame as you thought me, Harry," she murmured, as she laid the letter in her lap. "Our property was all melting away, and they told me that you had grown cold and worldly, and I thought I must, too. If the letter had only come the week before, I should not have been—what I am now."

And then she looked around that elegant chamber, and thought what she was now,—a wife, bought and sold and paid for, in gold and lands and earthly grandeur. How the thought burned and festered in her proud soul as she sat there!

A wife, loved by her husband as he loved his horses, his dogs, and his houses; loved, but only because her beauty and her grace were the crowning glory, the chiefest ornament, of that magnificent home which was his soul's delight.

The lady looked around her luxuriant chamber that morning with a sinking heart. The marble wash stands, the damask curtains, the handsome carpets, looking like a world of Damascus roses, scattered over a bed of snow, were worthy the wife of a millionaire.

And yet the mistress of all this wealth, sitting in her chamber, murmured to herself, "I wish he had never found me in the old red brick house where I was so happy! I wish I stood this very morning in the kitchen of the little cottage we were to have, and that, in a plain cotton dress, I was preparing your dinner, my Harry!"

"Please, ma'am," and the entrance of her maid was a harsh interruption to the lady's monologue—"Mr Fleming has just sent home the new drab and pink satin for the party next Tuesday night."

Ah me! those old letters!—if she had never read them! That party!—if she had never gone to it!

* * * * * *

"You have not forgotten me, Laura! I read it in your blue eyes to-night."

Harry Atwood's voice had lost none of its old depth, as he leaned down his handsome head to Mrs. Fleming's as they stood together in an alcove of the conservatory.

Most of the company had left, for it was late, and they were quite secure from observation. Mr. Fleming was not a jealous husband, and he was quite content that others should admire his wife, so that he possessed her.

It was understood that Mr. Atwood and Mrs. Fleming were old friends, so they had nothing to fear from a prolonged tete-a-tete. They had suddenly, unexpectedly met at the party, and the heart of either was not changed.

Harry Atwood had become a successful lawyer now, and the world honored him. He had forgiven Laura long ago, for he had heard she was more "sinned against than sinning."

"Harry—Mr. Atwood, I mean—I am very glad to meet you and find you looking so well."

The lady's voice was courteous and calm; but her fingers trembled as they played with the carved points of her ivory fan.

"Call me Harry, Laura, for the sake of old times," said he, "and look up to me once, and say you have not forgotten them. Oh, Laura, I have thought how the bright star of this evening's festival once rose over my heart, and then went down for ever. We cannot stay here much longer. Will you not grant me an interview to morrow night—a private one—in your own house?"

"I cannot, Harry," she replied; "do not ask me. I am the wife of another now."

"And what harm could there be in our walking together for half an-hour in your garden?" said Harry. "Your husband would not object to this, for I have watched the man narrowly to-night, and know him well. You could not refuse so simple a request to the veriest acquaintance. We have had many walks together, Laura, down by the old mill and past the meadow-pond. Will you refuse me one now?"

He looked down on the fair face, and he saw that tears were on it, and he knew what the answer would be, before it was given.

"You may come, Harry," she said.

* * * * * *

That walk in the dim moonlight upon Mr. Fleming's beautiful grounds was followed by many another, for the first steps in the forbidden way are usually pleasant ones.

Poor Mrs. Fleming! she meant no wrong; and then she loved Harry, although she tried to conceal this from him; but when he talked of the past, in those low, tender tones of his, her tears would come: she could not help it.

One evening—it must have been more than a week after their first meeting—Harry told Mrs. Fleming that his heart was unchanged; that the old love still lived there—a sweet but mourning memory.

"Oh, Harry! don't, don't! You forget; I am his wife!" murmured the young creature, as she bowed her pale face on her hands.

Then the lawyer drew his arm around her waist, just as he had done in the days that were gone, and said, "You belonged to me first, Laura! Our souls were married before you ever took that false oath at the altar!"

He whispered to her of a flight to softer skies—of a home fairer than the one they had dreamed of in their youth—of a life that should be one long poem of love!—That time she fled from him with a wild shriek of fear and horror.

They did not meet again for many nights. If during that time she had only remembered the prayer of her childhood, "Lead us not into temptation!" But she was so young; and then that affection was the one blossom her life had cherished in the midst of its sterile grandeur.

One night she was standing on the steps of her mansion, for she had just taken leave of some guests, when Harry Atwood suddenly sprang before her.

I do not know what was said by either party, but there were frantic gestures and wild appeals on one side, and a little later Mrs. Fleming was walking among her garden shadows with Harry Atwood.

This was repeated for several evenings, until, one midnight, a closed carriage rolled hastily away from the private entrance of Mr. Fleming's grounds. The next day his wife was gone!

What an electrical thrill it sent through the fashionable world!—for her beauty and her rank had made Mrs. Fleming its especial idol.

She knew little of the censure and scorn that were heaped on her head in the quiet of that Italian home to which she was borne by the man who loved her only too well.

The world said Mrs. Fleming was happy there, but it was false. No woman can ever be happy who makes memory a remorse and love a crime.

But, dear me, how I used to smile when everybody made a parenthesis of pity in their anathemas on Mrs. Fleming—"Her poor husband and parents! My heart aches for them." And, sitting very quiet and listening, I thought, always, "Well, the one bought and the others sold her; and so they had their reward."

BUYING THE RING.

"I often wonder whether at any subsequent period of his life a young man feels more self-conscious than when he first proceeds to buy an engagement ring," said a jeweler not long ago.

"There is, after all, nothing in the act to be ashamed of, yet, to judge from the behavior of some of these love-stricken customers, one would think that they had to steal a ring instead of honestly purchasing one.

"Many a time have I watched a young man pass and re-pass, gazing furtively into my shop until it was void of customers, before venturing in, and even then, in nine cases out of ten, he has not the courage to ask for what he wants outright. He will buy some trivial object—a scarf-pin, perhaps—first; and on being asked if there is anything else, recollects that he wants a ring, a lady's ring.

"A question as to the size disturbs his equanimity terribly, but he is generally provided with the answer—another ring, a hole cut in a visiting card, a piece of string, the upper part of his own little finger, are all used as guides to this important point.

"Sometimes, but very occasionally, the lady accompanies her intended on the delicate errand, and then the efforts to conceal their relationship are most amusing. I remember one such pair pretending they were brother and sister, and buying the circlet for a third person.

"They consulted as to whether 'Fred' would like this or that; and having finally made a choice, they slipped the jewel on her own slim finger, remarking that her rings always fitted 'Lucy.' They departed quite under the impression that their innocent little deception had proved successful.

"Alas! that the spirit of meanness should be allowed to sully the tenderest of all the passions, yet so it is. Only a few months back I was asked by the purchaser of an engagement token if I would mind doubling the price of the article in the bill, so as to make it appear that he had paid more for it, as, indeed—so he informed me—he had promised to do.

"It is perhaps needless to observe that I refused, as I did also the request of another customer who wished me, in the event of inquiries being made, to give it a fictitious value. These cases, I believe, were genuine; but both the dodges have been tried by swindlers.

"The men who prefer these requests seem to imagine that a dealer has no conscience; and but two days ago I quite offended a gentleman by declining to aid him in the following scheme. He and his lady-love were coming to choose an engagement ring; and, as she was of extravagant tastes, he wished me to show them some moderately cheap wares, with the prices largely increased for that occasion only.

"The purchase made, the gentleman proposed to call on me the next day, when I could refund the difference between the real price and the one paid by him. However ingenious, the idea was little to the credit of its originator.

"The only time I ever lent myself to any trickery of the kind, I consider that I was justified by the circumstances, which were these: A young fellow of good family, after running through his inheritance, fell in love with a beautiful and very wealthy girl, to whom he became engaged.

"Her parents, although aware that he was not rich, little suspected the true state of his affairs. Of course, he had to get a ring, and it was necessary that it should be a good one; but he had no money and no credit, having exhausted the patience of even the money-lenders.

"In his dilemma, he came to me and asked for the loan of a ring. He already owed me over one hundred dollars, and seeing that but for this marriage I stood small chance of getting it, I lent him a handsome ring, worth about two hundred and fifty.

"He promised faithfully to return the trinket in the event of the engagement being broken off, but, fortunately for myself and his other creditors, the necessity never arose.

"Shortly after the wedding I received a cheque for two hundred dollars. Whether he ever told his wife the story of her engagement ring I cannot say, but they are one of the happiest couples I know."

HUNTED AWAY.—A very curious custom is that called the women's hunt, which prevails among some of the aboriginal tribes of Chota Nagpore, India. It is observed whenever any calamity falls upon the community, such as, perhaps, a visitation of cholera. The women put on men's clothes, take up arms, and go a hunting—not in the jungles, but in the nearest villages east of them.

They chase pigs and fowls, take as their own everything they kill, and levy blackmail from the heads of the villages for the purchase of liquor, or else allow themselves to be bought off. Towards evening the party retire to a stream, cook and eat their meal, drink their liquor, and then return home, having acquitted themselves during the day in a thoroughly masculine and boisterous manner.

Then the village that has been visited goes on a similar excursion to the next village east of it, and so on to the eastern borders of the district. Thus it is supposed the evil spirit of the affliction is conducted out of the district without offending its dignity.

One village excepted from the operation of the custom is called Mahadeva, being devoted to Mahadevi, and under his protection. If cholera appears there, it is because he is offended and must be propitiated before it will disappear.

Humorous.

ENGLISH AS SPOKEN.

"Oh! tailor, press my suit to-day,"
The young man cried in sorrow;
"Because my girl expects that I
Will press my suit to-morrow."

"These clothes I wear are thin and old,
And scarcely worth a hooter,
And such a suitor as I am
I'm sure would never suit her."

"Of course," the tailor said with glee,
When seen the young man's sorrow;
"My lawyer has your last year's bills,
He'll press the suit to-morrow."

Sweet home—A bee-hive.

Marine art—Steamers drawing water.

Mock auction—The place where the buyer is sold.

People who pay big interest—Those who borrow trouble.

The cleverest thing imaginable—An accomplished fact.

"This beats me,' as the egg remarked, when it saw the spoon.

Once in a minute, twice in a moment, once in a man's life!—The letter M.

A rough estimate—Guessing at the number engaged in a street brawl.

Some one remarks that "solitude is well enough until you want to borrow something."

Teacher: Why was George Washington a great man?

Tommy: Because we don't have no school on his birthday.

Doctor: My good woman, does your son always stutter?

Mother: Not always, sir—only when he attempts to talk.

Elderly maiden: This is so unexpected, Mr. Wellalong, that that you must give me time.

Elderly Lover: Time, Miss Rebecca! Do you think there is any to spare?

"What made the mule kick you?" they asked of a gentleman who had been sent flying through the roof of a barn. And he answered: "Do you think I was fool enough to go back and ask him?"

Medical examiner: Have there ever been any symptoms of insanity in your family?

Applicant for insurance: Yes, sir—er that is, my sister once refused a man worth half a million.

"Great joke on Jarley."

"What was that?"

"Went fishing and didn't catch anything. Ordered a half-dozen bass sent to his house, so that his wife would think he caught 'em. When the basket was opened they turned out to be bottled Bass."

"Pa, is generals brave men?" asked Johnny of his father.

"Yes, my son, as a rule," was the answer.

"Then why does artists always make pictures of 'em standing on a hill three miles away, lookin at the battle through an opera glass?"

He, reading paper: Here's a note about an accident at White's house. The servant put some gunpowder in the fire and she was blown through the roof.

She, sympathetically: Poor Mrs. White has so much trouble with her girls! They are always leaving her without giving notice.

"Can't you give me employment, ma'am?" said the tramp.

"I haven't had anything to do for months."

"Poor fellow. What can you do?"

"Well, ma'am, I am a good watcher. If I could sit out here on yer front porch an' watch the front gate, so's no one could steal it, you'd find I was very competent."

"Colonel Brown," remarked a chappie, "is the finest after-dinner speaker I know of."

"I never heard he had any ability in that direction at all," said his friend, in some astonishment.

"Well, he has; I've dined with him several times at various places, and after dinner he always says: 'That's all right, my boy; I'll pay for it.'"

Wife: John, I suppose you have some money saved up haven't you?

John: Not a fraction.

Wife: Why, John! It's a year since you stopped drinking, and you have worked like a slave every day since.

John: That's true.

Wife: Where is your money, then?

John: The money I saved by swearing off I had to lend to old friends who didn't swear off.

"This, then, Miss Grassneck," said the young man as he started for the door, "is your final decision?"

"It is, Mr. Wicksugge," said the young girl firmly.

"Then," he replied, his voice betraying an unnatural calmness, "there is but one more thing to add."

"What is that?" she asked, toying absently with the lobe of her shell-like ear.

"It is this," he muttered: "Shall I return those black satin suspenders by mail, or will you have them now?"

ON COMMON ERRORS.

Belief in lucky and unlucky days and doings has taken stronger hold on some of us than we are willing to allow.

Who has not heard of the unfortunate character of Friday, the day of the week, they say, on which Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit?

As it, then, every day were not alike, either for starting on a journey, or for getting married, or for beginning a new enterprise, or for anything else.

Tuesday and Wednesday have long got the credit of being lucky days, and Thursday is held by some ignorant people to have only one lucky hour—the hour before the sun gets up.

In connection with thunderstorms, we meet with one or two errors in fact. It is an error, for example, to suppose that the beech tree is a defence against lightning; it runs quite as much chance of being struck as other trees, and one is no safer under it than under an oak or an ash or an elm.

The ancients used to say the same about the bay-tree, and Pliny, the Roman historian, tells that the Emperor Tiberius always crowned himself with bay during a thunderstorm.

There is also a popular belief that a house-leek grown upon a roof will shield the house from lightning, but it is a rustic safeguard which was never known to have any effect.

That a mysterious virtue resides in some precious stones is an old and curious error. During the Russo-Turkish war of 1877, turquoise rings were much worn by the Russian officers as a talisman against danger, the turquoise being supposed to preserve the wearer from a violent death.

Other stones are supposed to cure diseases, and to be an antidote against poisons. The diamond was long believed to minister to a mind diseased, and to be a certain cure for insanity.

Trust in talismans has certainly not died out. It is not so long since this paragraph appeared in the will of the late Emperor Napoleon III.: "With regard to my son, let him keep as a talisman the seal I used to wear attached to my watch, and which comes from my mother."

In natural history there are a great many errors abroad which have taken their rise either in careless observation, or in the proverbial fertile imagination of travellers.

Practical humorists have also, maybe, been at the bottom of a few of them. The lion, the so-called "King of the Beasts," has been found out to be an indolent, sulking animal, whose far-famed generosity and courage are very doubtful; indeed, his generosity seems to depend very much on the state of his appetite.

The camel also, the "ship of the desert," has for a long time had more than his share of compliments. Stupidity seems to be its characteristic, and of all creatures none equals it for cowardice. The elephant has had its intelligence much exaggerated.

The sloth furnishes us with another error. His name has been given him by people who have observed his habits in places where Nature never intended that he should exhibit.

"In his native trees," observes one writer, a naturalist, "one would never think of calling him a sloth; he passes from tree to tree at a good round pace."

That "birds in their little nests agree" is an error for which Dr. Watts is responsible. If tempers in households were allowed to manifest themselves like tempers in birds' nests, domestic happiness would speedily become a thing of the past.

Among birds the robin, perhaps on account of his handsome waistcoat, backed by a poetical tradition and a pretty nursery tale, has managed to sneak into our affections. But he is now unmasked, and known to be a pugnacious little rascal of positively murderous propensities.

A natural history error that still survives is that a mad dog invariably avoids the water. The "dread of water" which we would infer from the name hydrophobia is not always present either in the patient or in the animal inflicting the injury.

There is a curious superstitious practice in which a rod of hazel is used in searching for water or minerals. A long, forked branch or twig forms the divining rod, and the person bearing it walks very slowly over the ground where it is thought that mines or springs exist.

When the rod, which is held horizontally, bends of itself, that indicates the presence of the desired metal or water. Even at the present day this species of divination is practiced in some districts.

It is an oft-repeated error that plants poison the air of a room by the exhalation of carbonic acid during the night. This has been shown to be a fallacy.

Many incidents and anecdotes with which everyone is familiar are unfortunately either misrepresentations of facts or absolutely without foundation. They often keep in circulation because they are picturesque and pleasing in themselves; if not true, they are cleverly invented, and it seems almost a pity to throw doubt on what harms nobody.

In Roslin Chapel one is told a thrilling story of an apprentice who carved a pillar in a style which his master could not approach, and, as a reward for his pains, was knocked on the head by his master's mallet.

The same legend is connected with elaborately-carved pillars in many Gothic edifices of the Middle Ages, and it is clear they cannot all be true.

Then wherever there is a castle with a monastery, or an old church in the neighborhood, one is pretty sure to hear of an underground passage connecting the two, and that into that underground passage once went a piper the sound of whose pipes was traced as he went on and on till at last all was silent, for the poor man was eaten by rats.

Perhaps this really happened once, but why should so many places be anxious to be thought the scene of such a dismal tale?

Many errors in fact have had their origin in hoaxes. One of the most ingenious inventors of spurious facts was George Steevens, the Shakespearian commentator, whose entire life has been characterized as "displaying an unparalleled series of arch-deception, tinctured with much malicious ingenuity."

One of his inventions was the description of the poisonous upas-tree of Java, the effluvia from which killed all things that came near. The account spread into general literature as a fact, was commented on by naturalists, furnished a subject for many a painter, and is believed in by some people to this day.

Some hoaxes, however, one would have thought that the least particle of common-sense would have seen through. It shows how ready people are to swallow things without thinking when the bottle-hoax, of which everyone has heard, met with so much success.

This famous trick arose from a wager that, let a man advertise the most impossible thing in the world, he would find fools enough in London to fill a playhouse, and pay handsomely for the privilege of being there.

Accordingly, a person advertised that he would, on a certain evening at the Haymarket Theatre, play on a common walking-cane the music of every instrument then in use, to surprising perfection, and that he would, on the stage, get into a tavern quart bottle, without equivocation, and while there sing several songs, and suffer any spectator to handle the bottle. The advertisement brought crowds, "bottle noodles" they were called afterwards, but, of course, there was no performance.

There once was a time when a confiding public was prepared to accept everything in print as true, and extra respect is even yet paid to the dignity of type over manuscript, or word of mouth. Authors and compilers, however, know too well how many errors in fact obtain a hold on the public in this way.

To give an example, a farmer's wife read in a newspaper paragraph that the best plan to encourage hens to lay was to give them salt in their food. She had a number of almost profitless birds—it was then winter time—so she boiled some rice, putting in plenty of salt, and fed the fowls.

The consequence was that the following morn an inquest had to be held on all the occupants of the henhouse, except one whom the greed of her companions had prevented from having a fair share of the salted provisions.

Occasionally, however, blunders are not involuntary, as when a foreign historian in the battles he describes, inserted the names of many persons who were not present, and this merely to confer honor on some particular families.

THE SMALLEST RING.

In the reign of George III. brides usually removed the ring from its proper abiding place to the thumb as soon as the ceremony was over. In Spain, the gift of a ring is looked upon as a promise of marriage, and is considered sufficient proof for a maiden to claim her husband. The breaking of a wedding-ring is regarded in some parts as an omen that its wearer will soon be a widow.

Widows, formerly, wore their ring on the thumb as an emblem of widowhood.

The smallest wedding-ring probably ever made is that which was used for the nuptials of Princess Mary, daughter of Henry VIII., to the Dauphin of France, son of King Francis I. The dauphin was born February 20th, 1518, and as a matter of state policy, the bridal ceremony took place on October 5th of the same year with great pomp at Greenwich. The two year old bride was dressed in cloth of gold and blazing with jewels. Cardinal Wolsey placed the diminutive ring of gold upon the child's finger, and Admiral Bonnivet, as proxy for the baby-bridegroom, passed it over the second joint.

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Very respectfully,
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Ex-Member of Congress, 5th District.

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